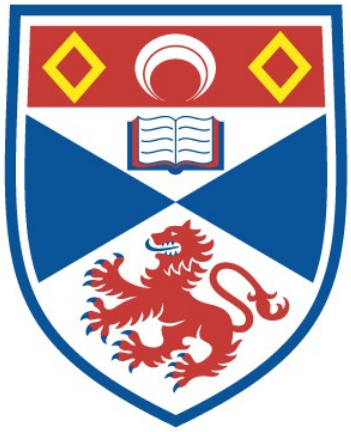
Ghosts and ancestral spirits as witnesses of World War Two in Papua New Guinea

Gregory Waula Gribinien Tuna Bablis

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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Abstract

My thesis explores relationships with the 'ghosts of war' – foreign war dead from Australia, Japan, and the United States – in former battlefield sites in Papua New Guinea. I focus on two sites prominent in PNGs World War Two history: the Wide Bay area 100 km south of Rabaul on New Britain island, site of the infamous Tol Plantation Massacre of 160 Australian POWs by Japanese Forces in February 1942; and the Gorari area of Oro Province, where Japanese forces suffered defeat in early November 1942. Both sites hold many unrecovered war dead, with local people experiencing complex relationships with the legacy of WWII and the ghosts of war.

The former combatant nations are actively searching for their dead in their old theaters of war. Additionally, thanatourism and war tourism have increased in popularity for the people of these countries. For people in former battlefield sites I work in, their relationships to the bones of the foreign war dead, and ghosts of war, become important ways through which they extend historical connections and pursue present relations with foreign others who go to their places.

I analyse local idioms through which people remember, interpret, and reinterpret their war histories. In the accounts, some people become aligned to a side during the war, but their rationale are framed according to their own cultural modes and ways of thinking. Many of my interlocutors have postulated that WWII was a foreign war and that they, or their parents and grandparents, were simply caught in between. On the other hand, a politico-religious group in one of my fieldsites have their own cosmological framing of WWII that entirely disregards the ideological orientations of the former combatant nations. Their worldview re-evaluates notions of 'origin' and 'foreign' and flips the narrative of WWII being a foreign war in PNG.

Contents

Candidate's Declaration ii
Candidate's Declaration ii
Supervisor's Declaration ii
Permission for publication ii
Underpinning Research Data or Digital Outputs Candidate's Declaration iv
Abstract v
Contents vi
List of Figures viii
General Acknowledgements ix
Funding x
Abbreviations xi
Maps 1
Papua New Guinea Overview Map 1
Oro Province Overview Map 2
Wide Bay Overview Map 3
Introduction 4
Oro Da – Welcome to Place 4
Ghosts of War? 8
Whose War Is It? 13
The Massacre at Tol 19
The Battlegrounds of Gorari 22
Ethnography of War 25
Methodology 28
Outline of Thesis 31
Chapter 1 – Papua New Guineans in World War Two 33
Section 1 – Mit In A Sanwitch 33
Section 2 – The Carriers 44
Section 3 – Soldiers 53
Section 4 – Alleged Collaborators 59
Chapter 2 – A Foreign War? – The Kivung Way 69
Section 1 – The Wan-Wol Gavman 71
Section 2 – Breaking the Barrier 82
Section 3 – The Selenelion: Looking Over the Dead 91
Chapter 3 – On the Bones of the Living-Dead 102
Section 1 – The Kaiva Cosmology 106
Section 2 – The Sulka Spiritual World 118
Section 3 – Concluding Remarks 132
Chapter 4 - 'Caring for the Living-Dead and Making New Relationships Among the Living-Living' 136
Section 1 – Etoa: A Binding Multinational Project 138
Section 2 – The Bone Man of Kokoda 147
Section 3 – Concluding Remarks 155
Chapter 5 – The Legal and Political Lives of Bones and the Ghosts of War 156
Section 1 – Political Manoeuvring for the Future 157
Section 2 – The Legal Lives of Bones and the Ghosts of War 177

Conclusion 184
Section 1 - Summary 184
Section 2 – Ghosts of War in PNG's Socio-Geographic Space 188
Section 3 – The Museumization of Wartime Histories ..... - 191
Bibliography 200
Appendix 214

List of Figures

Figure 1. Photograph of Divune Mass Burial Site 7
Figure 2. Overview of 'Orokaiva' ..... .35
Figure 3. Overview of Wide Bay ..... .41
Figure 4. George Silk Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel Photograph ..... .49
Figure 5. Photograph of Joseph Sananpike in Tol ..... .55
Figure 6. Sketch of Sergeant William Matpi ..... .57
Figure 7. Sketch of Sergeant Katue ..... .58
Figure 8. Image of page 5 of the Allied Forces *You and the Native* Pamphlet ..... .61
Figure 9. Kivung name list of the dead in the Baining village of Merai ..... .74
Figure 10. The Kivung Gavman Haus and Misin Haus in Marunga ..... .77
Figure 11. Kivung City Haus signboard in Marunga ..... .77
Figure 12. The kuskus standing inside the Gavman Haus in Marunga ..... .78
Figure 13. Map of Jacquinot Bay showing important Mengen-Kivung oral history sites ..... .83
Figure 14. Singapore patch at Wara Kalap ..... .88
Figure 15. Kivung logo on old official poster ..... .90
Figure 16. Official Kivung flag flying in Marunga ..... .90
Figure 17. Peloumatana in Jacquinot Bay ..... .96
Figure 18. Eastern entrance of Kapolo Cave, Malmal ..... …99
Figure 19. View of Kapolo Cave looking out from its western entrance ..... …100
Figure 20. Australian memorial site, Gorari Hu ..... …107
Figure 21. Japanese memorial, Jopure Hamlet ..... …108
Figure 22. Photographs of WWII bomb-head, Ufutumu Hamlet ..... …110
Figure 23. Map of Gorari-Waju Ward 10 and its WWII memorial sites ..... …112
Figure 24. Overview of Tol Station ..... …119
Figure 25. Temporary Australian wartime cemetery in Tol ..... …121
Figure 26. Marangona, special Mengen taro stone ..... …123
Figure 27. Old sasavang on Marana Plateau ..... …124
Figure 28. Geso holding the miniature statue of the Virgin Mary ..... …127
Figure 29. Map of Etoa Battlefield ..... …139
Figure 30. Japanese Hanko belonging to Komatsu ..... …144
Figure 31. Japanese bones at Divune Mass Burial Site ..... …161
Figure 32. Corpse in Sylvester's garden, Tol ..... …164
Figure 33. Dog tags found in Pate's garden, Tol ..... …166
Figure 34. Tol 2/22 Lark Force War Memorial Park ..... …171
Figure 35. Memorial plaque and cairn erected in 1987, Tol ..... …172
Figure 36. Map of Tol Growth Centre Proposed Planning Zones ……..... .174
Figure 37. Alola Community Museum and Trade Centre signboard……..... .194
Figure 38. Aerial shot of Alola Museum……..... .194
Figure 39. Internal gallery space of Alola Museum……..... .195
Figure 40. Sample of exhibition text on display in the Alola Village Museum……..... .196

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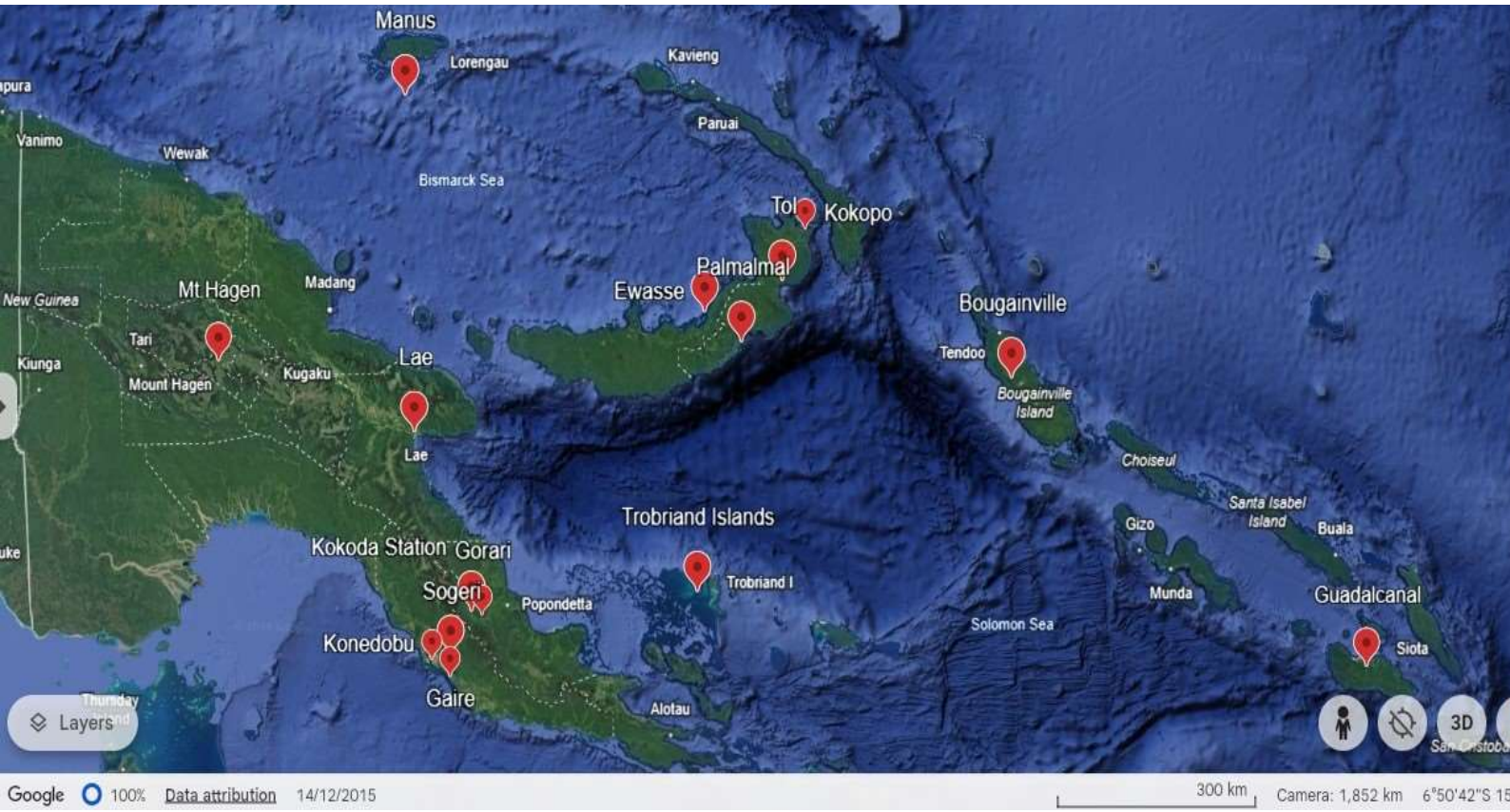
Abbreviations

ANGAU –	Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit
AWM –	Australian War Memorial
DPAA –	Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency
ENBP –	East New Britain Province
FODE –	Flexible Open and Distance Education
JARRWC –	Japanese Association for Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties
KIA –	Killed in Action
LLG –	Local Level Government
MHA –	Member House of Assembly
MHLW –	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Japanese)
MIA –	Missing in Action
MP –	Member of Parliament
NDoE –	National Department of Education
NGIB –	New Guinea Infantry Battalion
PIB –	Papuan Infantry Battalion
POW-	Prisoner of War
PNG –	Papua New Guinea
PM –	Prime Minister
SDA –	Seventh-Day Adventist
UPNG –	University of Papua New Guinea
US –	United States
UWC-ADF –	Unrecovered War Casualties – Australian Defence Force
WNBP –	West New Britain Province
WWI –	World War One
WWII –	World War Two

Maps

Papua New Guinea Overview Map



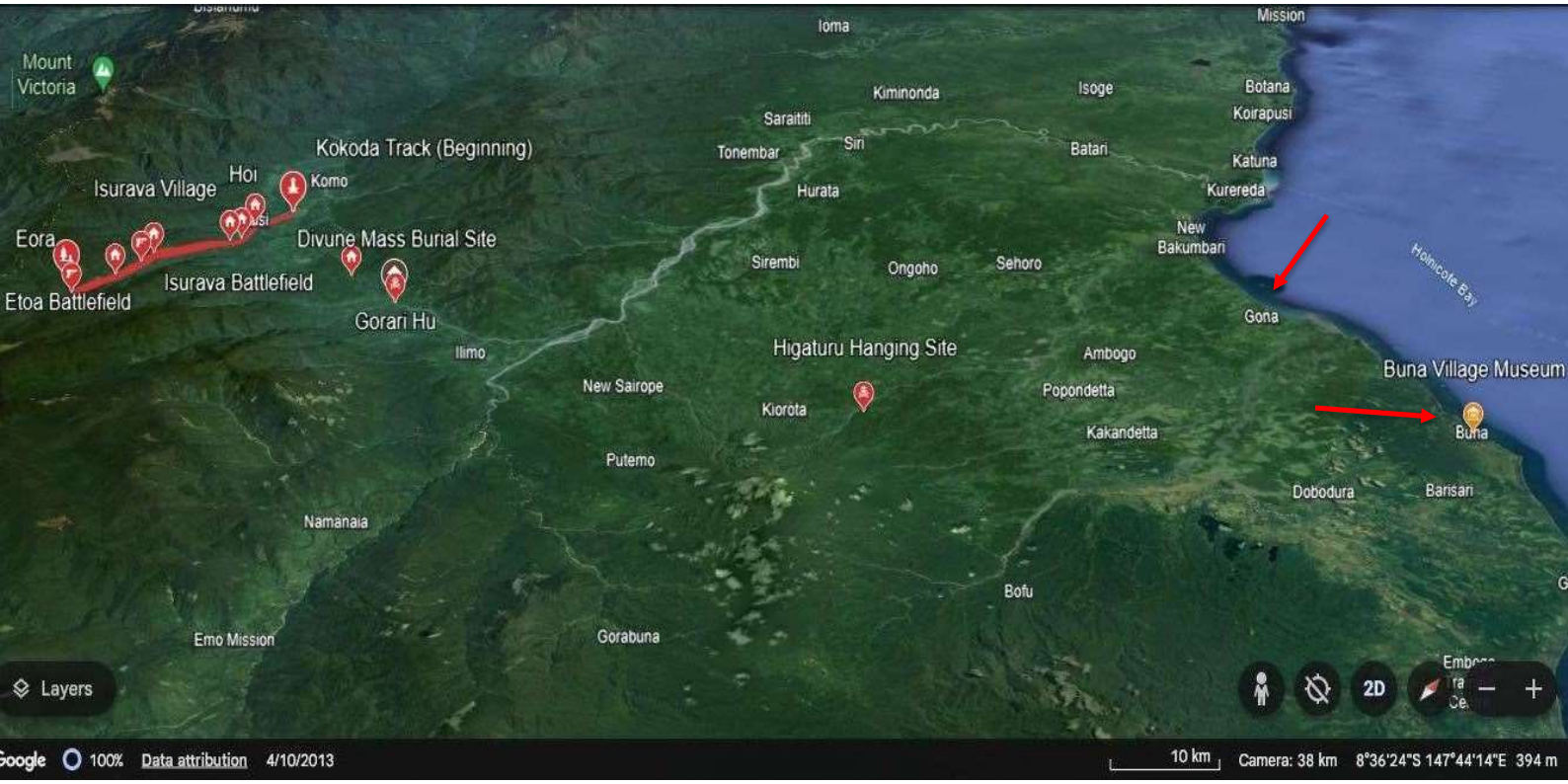
Overview map of PNG showing Gorari Fieldsite in relation to the provincial capital of Oro, Popondetta. The Map also shows Tol Fieldsite in the Wide Bay area. Kokopo, the current provincial capital of East New Britain Province, is located north – on the Gazelle Peninsula. Rabaul is west of Kokopo. I also spent time at Palmalmal, Jaquinot Bay, southwest of Wide Bay.

I have also indicated on this map other important places in the history of the war that I make mention of throughout my thesis. Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands can be seen in the southeast and Bougainville is northwest of it. Konedobu on the southwest coast of PNG was an important colonial administrative center and is now a suburb of Port Moresby, the capital of PNG. Sogeri is north of Port Moresby and is near to Owers Corner, the start of the Kokoda Track on the Central Province side. Kokoda Station is on the Oro Province side of the Track and is just 18 kilometers west of my fieldsite of Gorari. Manus was an important and strategic base for the Allied Forces and is the northernmost province of PNG, and borders Micronesia.

I also indicate my maternal village of Ewasse in the East Nakanai District of WNBP, which was the launchpad for my movements to Tol in Wide Bay.

Google Earth image.

Oro Province Overview Map

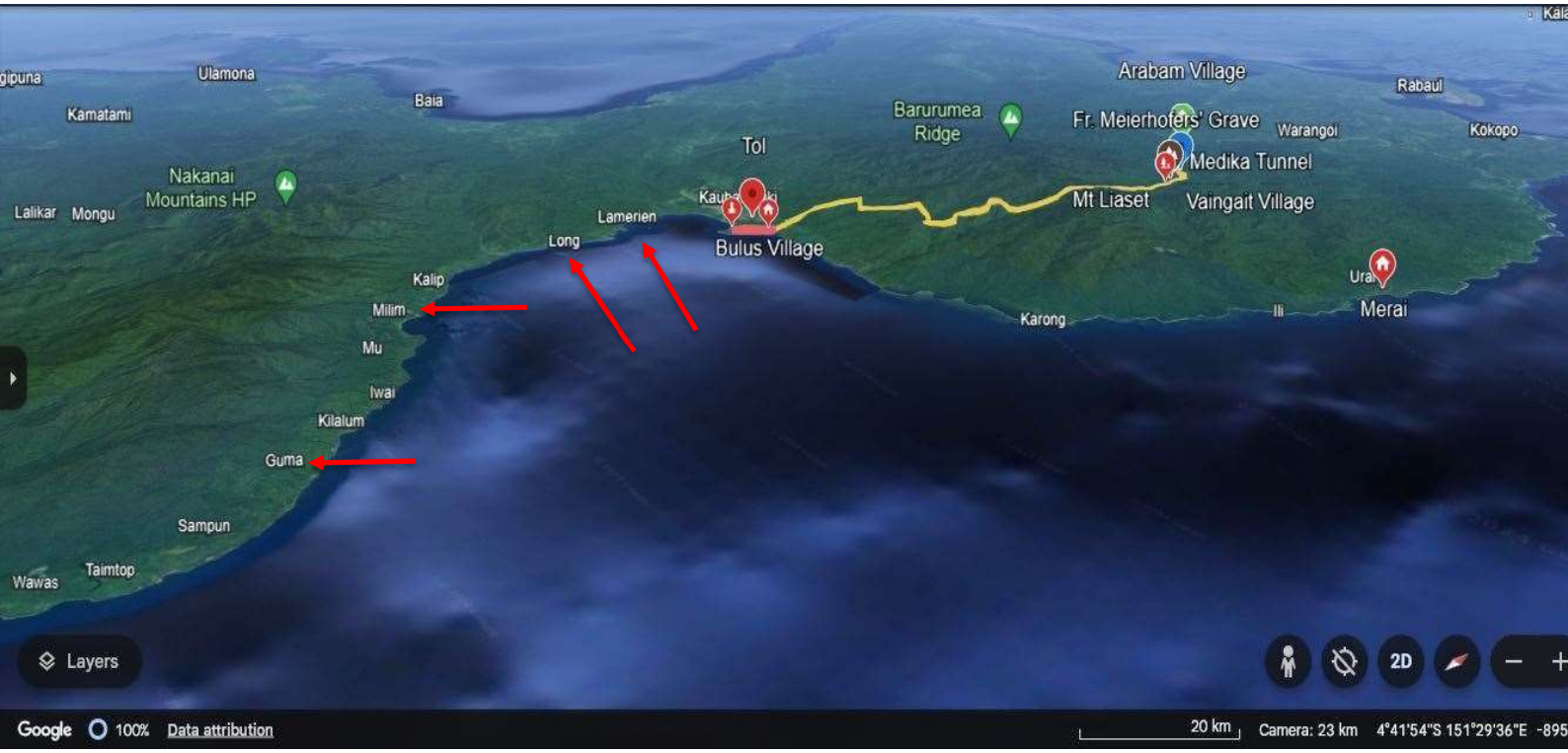


Overview map of Oro Province showing part of the Kokoda Track in the west beginning from Etoa. From October 1942 the fighting moved from Etoa to Isurava, Kokoda Station, and through Oivi and Gorari in early November then through the Central Kaiva area and back to the coast at Buna from mid-November onwards to January 1943.

The Northern Beaches, mentioned numerous times in my thesis, can be seen in the far east on the map. Buna and Gona are indicated by the red arrows and Sanananda is located between these two villages. Endaiadere is a few kilometers southeast along the coast from Buna.

Google Earth image.

Wide Bay Overview Map



Map showing route taken by most of the Lark Force soldiers who escaped from Rabaul and were later massacred by the Japanese Army in Tol on 4 February 1942. The Lark Force Track is 64 kilometers across the Baining Ranges between Arabam and Tol in Wide Bay. Kokopo, seen northeast of Rabaul, is the current provincial capital of East New Britain Province.

The red arrows indicate the Sulka villages where I spent time and are mentioned in the thesis including Guma, Milim, Long, and Lamarieng.

Google Earth image.

Introduction

Oro Da – Welcome to Place

Oro da

Oro da

Oro da Biage

Oro da Kaiva

Welcome to this place

Welcome to this place

Welcome to the place of the Biage

Welcome to the place of the Kaiva

Oro means welcome

Da means place

Oro, Oro, Oro

Coming from a smiling face

Greetings for strangers and kin

And for you and me

This is no awful din

But jovial camaraderie

From Eora, Etoa, Isurava, Kokoda

To Hoi, Sengi, Oivi and Gorari

Kovelo to Kamando

Sisireta to Kakandetta

Oro, Oro, Oro

The place of flying monarchs
And wingless angels
The bird-sized butterfly
And ghosts who walk

Our very own Los Angeles
Home of Michelangelos and Raphael
Messengers and labourers
Fuzzy Wuzzies on bush tracks
Carers and soldiers
Papuans and New Guineans
All shades of black

Bloody be Buna
Gona got gone
Shattered seashores Sanananda saw
Enough had everyone at Endaiadere

Welcome to this place
Of grass-skirts and tapa
A place of people
From Binandere to Kaiva
Of warriors and chiefs
Sorcerers and martyrs
Men and women
From Hunjara and Kaina

- Gregory Bablis, Gorari Hu, October 2022

The air temperature eased its daily spike and began cooling as the sun lowered its gaze around the mid-afternoon interval. The balmy afternoon atmosphere signalled a change in the flow of village activities. School children were home by four o'clock and helping with chores. Women, boys, and girls were walking to the nearby rivers of Divune and Susu to bathe and fetch water for cooking the evening meals. Some people were returning from the day's activities elsewhere.

I sat under a pergola made of corrugated roofing iron sheets. The makeshift structure stood beside the three semi-permanent houses that comprised my host, Edrick Keke's, household. In my company was Keke himself and Kingsley Japara, the local Ward Member.

I had flown to Oro Province from Port Moresby three days earlier, on 11 December 2020. This was a preliminary trip to make contact again with the people of Gorari Hu where I intended to return and do six months of ethnographic fieldwork.

Given the more agreeable afternoon atmosphere, Keke, Japara and I decided to go for a stroll around the village. The road to the nearby government station of Kokoda, 18 kilometres west, runs through the hamlets of Gorari Hu, placing the primary school and Anglican Church grounds on its southern side. Many church grounds in Papua New Guinea (PNG) do not have an accompanying cemetery, allowing the traditional death and burial rites to be practised yet intermixing with some Christian elements.[1] Gorari Hu Hamlet has its own cemetery, a small patch of land just a few meters away from Keke's residence. A variety of coloured *tangets* (Tok Pisin term for the cordyline plant) mark each burial plot. One or two graves had been cemented and had headstones with wordings. Some are marked with a simple white wooden cross. Houses stood on either side of the small village cemetery.

We walked past the cemetery and crossed the dirt road to the school grounds. The local youth were playing afternoon soccer matches on a field that paints the school foregrounds pastoral green. The classrooms skirt around the field in horseshoe formation. A flagpole and a stage in the middle indicate that the grassy field also serves as the school's general assembly area. The foothills of the Owen Stanley Ranges tower obscurely seven kilometres south, as if minding its river plains from a distance. A smaller mountain range, the Ajura Kaiari, stands more directly over Susu River and the northern extremities of the settled area of Gorari.

My two interlocutors and I watched the soccer games for a while and then I asked them to take me to the Japanese mass burial site which lies under a cocoa block on the eastern banks of the Divune River. Gorari Hu is located on the western banks of the Divune and spreads out conterminously with the banks of the Susu until its confluence with Divune which separates the hamlet from the mass burial site. We walked the short distance from the school grounds to the Divune Mass Burial Site, as it is known in Japanese records.

Arriving there around dusk, under the bush was visibly darker than out on the open road. Keke led us through the grove of cocoa trees and soon pointed out the first bright yellow barricade tape that the Japanese Association for Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties (JARRWC) team use to mark battlefield features. Several trees have yellow tape hanging from

[1] See Laqueur (2015: 114-7) for instance where cemeteries are a usual appendage of a churchyard in other parts of the world.

them, indicating that skeletal remains from World War Two (WWII) had been recovered there.

Figure 1. Yellow tape hanging from a cocoa tree at the Divune Mass Burial Site marks the spot where JARRWC have previously recovered skeletal remains.

As we ambled around the carpet of dried foliage Keke tells me that when JARRWC started looking for their bones in the area they did not have much success. He recounts to me in Tok Pisin that,

> Pastaim ol sa kam em ol yet sa wok na mipla sa sanap lukluk tasol. Wanpla taim ol kam nau em mi tu go helpim ol lo lukluk. Ol wok wantaim metal detector na mi go wokabaut na tromoi toktok tasol na ol showim mi lo ol bun blo ol yet.
>
> When they first started coming, they would do all the work themselves while we just observed them. One time when they were here, I too went and helped them to search [for their bones]. They worked with their metal detectors and I simply walked and talked and they [the Japanese spirits] showed me their own bones.

Keke speaks to the foreign spirits in Hunjara *tokples* (Tok Pisin term that means 'village talk' and is used to refer to the native language of a place). He says the spirits of the Japanese soldiers, these ghosts of war, can understand his *tokples* because they have 'lived' in his place for so long and have learned it. Keke explains that as he walked, he would speak in his own language as if addressing an audience and might say,

> Yupla stap lo hia longpla taim na nau ol lain blo yupla yet kam lo painim yupla. Plis showim mi ol bun blo yupla so mi ken helpim ol lo kisim bun blo yupla go bek lo kantri blo yupla.
>
> You all have been here for so long and now your own people have come to look for you. Please show me your bones so I can help them to recover your bones and bring them back to your country.

After making this request, he randomly chooses a spot and digs. He may not have found bones on the first try but he eventually does, and he has found several skeletal remains in this manner whereby he talks to the spirits of Japanese soldiers as he would his own *tumbuna* (Tok Pisin term for ancestors). Talking with his *tumbuna* is a normal part of the circadian rhythm of his life as he regularly asks them for good fortune with hunting, gardening or gold panning in the creeks that flow down from the Ajura Kaiari mountains. Likewise, Keke entreats the intervention of the Japanese spirits in recovering their own bones to be taken by their government back to Japan.

Japanese soldiers during WWII did not know the Hunjara *tokples* but have presumably learned it as spirits denoting an implicit assimilation into the social and spiritual milieus in which they exist. Many people in my fieldsites believe that these 'foreign' spirits abound in their living environment, and I am interested in the quality of the relationship between the living and the spirits of the dead in the backdrop of former battlefield sites like Gorari. If the ghosts of war are both physically and relationally close to people like Keke then are they really 'foreign'? Why does Keke not discriminate between the way he talks with his *tumbuna* and the way he talks with the ghosts of war on his land? Is there a sense of an explicit assimilation of the 'foreign' ghosts of war into local cosmologies or is their otherness hypostasized as a valuable aspect of their state of being? What are the socioeconomic implications, of these local relational interplays, for living others who come to commemorate or search for the skeletal remains of their war dead?

Ghosts of War?

The landscape and environment of Gorari were the setting of much fighting and death in 1942. The Divune Mass Burial Site is just one known location where the bones of the foreign war dead, both Japanese and Australian, remain unrecovered in and around Oro Province. Much like cemeteries, former battlefields and WWII burial sites are places that are thought to be densely populated by spirits. How have the interactions between the living and the ghosts of war taken on altered contours because of their encounters? This thesis considers how representations of WWII, interactions between the living and ghosts of war, and continued interjections of foreign others at former battlefield sites like Gorari and Tol, my other fieldsite, reflect anxieties for the future. What type of response and social engagements are elicited from foreign others by the kinds of relations Keke describes as having with ghosts of war?

In the case of violent death, the continuing bond between the bereaved and the deceased takes on a new dimension, especially when those enduring but dynamic relations are sociopolitical in nature (Robben 2018: xvi). By focusing on memory, in this case, of the seldom recorded or written stories of Papuans and New Guineans during WWII, this thesis addresses temporal issues in the wider narrative of the war in the Pacific. I also consider the socio-religious impact of WWII in my fieldsites, hence my interest in spiritual entities like ghosts and ancestors, the phenomenological distinctions between these, and their relations with the living. Furthermore, I pay attention to the fate of human bodies, particularly of the corpses and bones of foreign soldiers of WWII and how people in my fieldsites have related to them since the end of the war. Studying the treatment of the body, from the moment of death until it is returned to a peaceful environment, can provide insight into the impact of mass violence on contemporary societies (Anstett & Dreyfus 2015: 3).

My involvement in human remains recovery work in 2019 at a former battlefield site called Etoa along the Kokoda Track is what first got me interested in ghosts and ancestors as categories of further inquiry. This wartime track begins at Kokoda Station. It was at Etoa that I first realized the importance of the interactions between landowners and their *tumbuna* and the ghosts of war, as well as emplaced spirits like *masalai* or *wasman* – two Tok Pisin terms that refer to guardian spirits of a place or what Durkheim calls 'true spirits' (1912: 203-4) or Casey's 'genius loci' (1939: 314). As a Papua New Guinean, I was already aware of these local categories but working in the landscape of a former battlefield was the context in which I would come to appreciate how these different spiritual identities engender and affect social relations among the living in the present. Many other groups of foreigners have died and been buried in PNG but this category of foreigners whose governments and armies still search for their remains compel the kinds of cross-cultural exchanges and ritual engagements I observed at former WWII battlefield sites like Etoa and Gorari.

Anstett & Dreyfus (2015: 2) note that a growing number of monographs and comparative studies of mass violence have brought into focus the fact many instances of mass violence have had to wait for a favourable political context to emerge, along with freer access to archives, before they could be documented. Heonik Kwon's *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (2008) is of this mould of studies. My own research was in many ways inspired by the ethnographic similarities and differences that emerged from a comparison with Kwon's work. In his ethnography 'some uprooted ghosts of war undergo a forceful symbolic transformation in non- native places to eventually turn into important genius loci there' (Kwon 2008: 6). In the Vietnam context, ghosts are the categorical opposite of ancestors, and as such they become strangers to the local community when this community enacts a ritual unity with its ancestral memory (Kwon 2008: 7). What are the social and ritual interplays between ghosts of war and people in my fieldsites? In my PNG fieldsites I explore the extent to which there is an explicit assimilation of the ghosts of war into local cosmologies whether through ritual or mundane social interactions as with Keke's 'dialogue' with Japanese spirits.

I explore these war-caused interactions within the broader context of ongoing human remains recovery work by the principal former combatants – Australia, Japan, and America – at PNG battlefield sites. These countries are still actively searching for unaccounted soldiers missing in

action (MIA) or killed in action (KIA) during WWII in battlefields around the world meaning this aspect of the war is still unresolved. The agenda for recovery, repatriation, and proper interment of the war dead remains open indefinitely and this makes former combatant nations inexorably linked to peoples and places where their soldiers died. Kwon (2008: 18) notes in the Vietnamese context that ghosts were entitled to the right to exist in the social world of the living, and that local ritual processes consisted of constant negotiations over social and ecological space with the ontologically given, socially distinct group of beings. I sought to explore these kinds of 'negotiations' in my PNG fieldsites and how they shape peoples' perspectives of the war in the present.

I am particularly interested in Kwon's methodological approach. In the introduction of his book, Kwon begins by differentiating between 'specters of history' and the idea of ghosts in Vietnam. He describes the 'specter of ideology', the 'specter of Marx', 'specter of communism', 'ghost of Stalin' or 'ghost of the cold war' as historical metaphors whereas ghosts in Vietnam are primarily of concrete historical identities, whose existence, although belonging to a past era, is believed to continue to the present time in an empirical rather than allegorical way. Ghosts, Kwon continues, are a preeminent popular cultural form in Vietnam and a powerful, effective means of historical reflection and self-expression (2008: 2).

In relation to European literary tradition, Kwon takes a post-Enlightenment approach that does not dismiss popular tales of apparition as irrational but rather takes them as having the capacity to express poetically, through 'a willing suspension of disbelief', the prevailing socio-economic inequalities and other critical aspects of the human condition. In this literary tradition the uncanny actions of the dead (the magical 'reality' of the story) are interwoven with the predicaments and contradictions in the material culture and normative orientations of the living (social and psychological 'realism') (Kwon 2008: 3). In alignment with Kwon's methodology, I take seriously the existence of ghosts in my fieldsites by recording how they affect people's social lives. Moreover, I explore social inequalities and temporal continuities of WWII by considering the remnant materiality of war, primarily bones, and the peoples' relations with foreign others who go to former battlefield sites.

According to Teiser (1988: 220 referenced in Kwon 2008: 131), 'Ghosts are a species in transition'. Kwon explains that in the language of the rites of passage, these transitory identities are doubly liminal beings who are neither severed from the living world nor incorporated to the world of the dead, and neither entirely separated from the negative space of 'bad death' nor entirely assimilated to the transcendental, positive symbolic space of ancestors and gods (2008: 131). The foreign dead have what Kwon describes as a 'displaced afterlife' (2008: 86) in Vietnam. Although, he does demonstrate the possibility for a foreign ghost to be assimilated into local spiritual worlds (2008: 103-130).

Dying during war tends to create the kind of negative circumstances that would lead to the displaced afterlife that Kwon describes. The Vietnamese concept of 'death in the street' (*chet duong*) is a situation in which the dead are 'missing in one place and unknown in another place'. According to Kwon, *chet duong* is opposite to the concept of 'death in the house' or 'death at home' (*chet nha*) (2008: 86).

Faust, in her ethnography of the American Civil War, considers the implications of dying on the battlefield for the afterlife of the spirit of a deceased soldier. By Victorian standards of *ars moriendi* (the art of dying), it was important for family or kin to witness a death in order to assess the state of the dying person's soul because these were critical moments that determined their eternal fate (2008: 10). This is not dissimilar to Japanese funeral customs where mourners need to see the dead person before sending them off to the realm of the dead (see Nishino 2022: 170) but in the chaos of war it was not always possible to even see the body of a loved one to carry out the appropriate death rites and settle their spirits. Ideas of a 'good death' and 'bad death' are also structured into beliefs and practices in PNG.

Ghosts stand in stark contrast to the positive space of ancestors. In Malinowski's famous ethnography, *baloma* are the main spirit form of settled ancestors (1916: 354) while *kosi* take on the kind of displaced afterlife and haunting presence associated with ghosts (1916: 355). In her more recent ethnography, Battaglia (1990: 66-7) also describes the 'placedness' of *baloma* on Sabarl Island but which are distinct from named ancestors called *tubu* (1990: 70). In her ethnography, the spirit entities that take on the negative space of death associated with ghosts are the *waunak* and the *piwapiwa* which could come about as a result of a person being killed during a war for instance (1990: 68-71).

The Papua New Guinean scholar and theologian, Bernard Narokobi, discusses similar notions in his Arapesh context. He explains that one of the basic elements of the human person (*arpen*) is *mijin* which is like a soul, and which is immortal and so continues its existence when the physical body dies (1989: 50-1). It is the *mijin* that might, depending on the circumstances of a death, become attached to a place, and remembered and experienced positively or negatively.

Among the Rawa for instance, people typically die at home surrounded by close relatives (Dalton 2019: 66). In one case described by Dalton, a Rawa man died in Port Moresby and because of the time it took to bring the body to the village, the corpse had begun to disintegrate and become putrefied. Many villagers associated the bad state of the corpse with sorcery. In another case a man in the village had died of chronic filariasis and elephantiasis that caused swelling of his genitals. This man had two wives and was known to be sexually promiscuous, so his death and the swelling of his penis were attributed to his perceived immoral acts (Dalton 2019: 67). For the Rawa, dying at home is a good death whereas the latter two are examples of bad deaths. The physical preservation of a corpse and notions of morality surrounding the circumstances of a death are important to determining a good from a bad death.

In my fieldsites I identify local categories of spiritual identities that persist upon death and how they are remembered or interacted with by the living. Ancestral spirits or *tumbuna* are distinguishable from ghosts or *tambaran* in Tok Pisin (cf. Aerts 1998: 51). Ghosts can also be referred to as *tewel* or *devol*, Tok Pisin terms for devil, reflecting the negative space of these transitory spiritual entities as well as how Christianity has influenced perceptions about keeping separate the space of the living and the dead (cf. Scott 2007: 268–70 & Scott 2013: 57-8 in the Makira, Solomon Islands context).

To understand the place of ancestors from a more modern, Christian-influenced perspective, I began conversing over email with Melanesian theologians early on in my fieldwork. Throughout my thesis, I invariably use the term living-living to refer to living persons and living-dead to refer to ancestors or generally to spirits of the dead. According to William Ferea, a lecturer and Papua New Guinean theologian in the Gender and Philosophy Strand of the University of PNG (UPNG), the terms are used widely among Melanesian theologians writing about death and the afterlife (personal communication, 06 May 2020). Thomas Davai Jr., a Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) pastor, explains that they are loanwords adopted by Melanesian theologians to describe Melanesian spiritualism (personal communication, 06 May 2020). Ps. William K. Longarr of the United Church further explains that the terms were initially coined by religious anthropologists working in post-independence Africa in the 1960s. Living-living refers to those physically present in this life while the living-dead refers to the ancestors (personal communication, 06 May 2020). According to Longgar, there are three reasons why the term living-dead is used to refer to ancestors,

a) Even though our ancestors have died, for us Melanesians they are still alive, immortalized in our memories, our stories, myths, and legends. We still tell stories about how they started our clans, and how they gave us lands. They are the founders of our clans and/or sub-clans. People point to a particular mountain or tree or river saying this is where our ancestors settled first. These are memories of our ancestors, so that though they have departed from this life they are still alive and part of our everyday experience.

b) Our traditional spirituality is owed to them; they gave us particular rituals, chants and they are still the power behind them. In many rituals, their names are invoked to empower those rituals – they are alive.

c) They are also referred to as regulatory beings because they are still part of our lives by regulating the traditional laws they gave to us as their progeny, by rewarding good behaviours with blessings (good harvest, plenty of children, good health, success in fishing and hunting, etc.). They punish us when we do not behave.

Longarr attributes the initial use of the terms living-living and living-dead to the African theologian John Mbiti. According to Mbiti (1970: 25), the living-dead are deceased persons still remembered within four to five generations. The living-dead is a person physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of spirits (1970: 25). My interest in ghosts and spirits of the dead or with the living-living and the living-dead are the kinds of 'negotiations' for 'social and ecological space' that happen in the context of former battlefield areas. In my fieldsites people often come by the bones of the foreign war dead, or encounter their ghosts, unexpectedly while gardening or digging post-holes for houses. There is a sense in which they come to occupy both the same physical and unseen spaces, a concept well documented in the Melanesian context. In Narokobi's cosmic view of Melanesia there is unity between the living and the dead on the same horizontal plane (1989: 8). Lawrence (1964: 12) earlier argued similarly that in traditional Melanesian culture, 'the cosmos was an almost exclusively physical realm; and that religion represented a system of putative relationships between human beings, deities, spirits of the dead, and totems existing within it'.

These contrast with Christian beliefs which generally tries to keep separate the social and geographical spaces of the living and the dead (see Lattas 1998: 110-19). Narokobi also discusses how among some Christian religious groups, communion with the dead is strictly prohibited as satanic or evil. Interaction between living and dead may be permissible in a restrictive sense as with a Saint or the resurrected Christ (Narokobi 1989: 8-9). In the Christian belief there are temporal discontinuities between the living and the dead, which appears not to be the case in Kwon's ethnography or in the Melanesian worldview.

Whose War Is It?

The question in the title of this section was one that many Papuans and New Guineans during WWII grappled with and answered differently. It is a question I never set out asking but was one continuously raised by very many people in my fieldsites. In my thesis I explore this question retrospectively to gauge local perspectives and lived experiences of the war, undiluted by the official Australian and PNG government expressions of a shared military heritage and friendship forged on the battlefield. Indeed, the shared historical trauma is important for today's bilateral relations, but my thesis seeks to expand on this singular narrative by ethnographically exploring the different ways in which WWII was experienced and is interpreted by Papua New Guineans today as a result of their ongoing relations with the ghosts of war and foreign others, especially in the space of war tourism, commemorations and the ongoing work of recovering the war dead. What anxieties about the future underpin proclamations that WWII was a foreign conflict and how do those differ from the kind of relational interplays between people, the materiality of war, and the ghosts of war?

Elsewhere in Melanesia WWII has been explicitly described as a 'foreign war'. When criticising a proposed American memorial and statue project in 1989, a former Prime Minister (PM) of the Solomon Islands, Peter Kenilorea, wrote in an opinion piece in the *Solomon Star* newspaper that, 'The Second World War was not our war… I think that apart from the praise given to our people for their services during the war years, the Americans and British need to consider some form of compensations to our local people' (White 1995: 538). Falgout notes in the Micronesian context that, 'Common themes running throughout these World War II accounts are the bad conditions, the poor treatment by Japanese and Allies alike, and the question of why Pohnpei had been caught in the middle of this foreign war' (Falgout 1991: 127).

The Governor for Oro Province in PNG, Gary Juffa, recently called for recognition, not just for the people's sacrifices during the war but for the 'continuing sacrifices' of landowners along the Kokoda Track. He states that their biggest contribution to the war tourism and trekking industry across their land is the fact that they continue to forego other development opportunities that would destroy the military heritage value of the wartime track. At the ANZAC Day (25 April 2024) dawn service at the Bomana Commonwealth War Cemetery in Port Moresby, Juffa delivered an impassioned speech, remarking in part that,

> The Biage people live here. They walk up and down this trail. They struggle to provide the [trekking] services that you and I take for granted. And you may say, 'well Governor, this is your responsibility.' Yes, but if we think about what has been said here – 'mateship'. Well, 'mateship' would be about us considering what they are giving up. What can we do to assist them? They've endured and they have the courage not to speak up against it and say 'well we want to participate in the economic development of our country. We want to have a mine, or we want to engage in agricultural activities. **We never asked for this war**.' They could easily say that. But they're not that type of people. They're a kind, peaceful, loving people.

This speech was made to Australian and Papua New Guinean dignitaries including the PMs of both countries. Despite the kinds of sentiments aimed at promoting the shared wartime heritage that are usually expressed at such government commemorations, here Juffa points to dialectical tensions between official government narratives and landowners' freedom to explore alternative development options like allowing extractive industries onto their land. His remarks allude to the underlying local perception that WWII was a foreign war, which some Kokoda Track landowners eagerly express when there is any strain on relations with the PNG and Australian governments.

Very few historical books portray Papua New Guinean accounts of WWII and even fewer are written by Papua New Guineans themselves. In the mould of the latter, *Nameless Warriors: The Ben Moide Story* by Lahui Ako (2012) is the most recent account. I was personally involved in this book project as Operations Manager of the UPNG Press & Bookshop. When I first read through Ako's manuscript in early 2012, I immediately recognized the significance of getting the manuscript published locally especially since it had been knocked back several times by Australian publishers.

Three years later when I had already joined the National Museum & Art Gallery (hereafter PNG Museum) and was curating an exhibition on the history of WWII in PNG, I made the book a central object in the space. I titled the exhibition *Tuari Helalodia*, a Motuan phrase that translates to 'voices from the war'. The PNG Museum, under its then Director, Andrew Moutu, wanted to shift the focus of WWII to the unheard, unrepresented or misrepresented Papua New Guinean stories. With the support of the Australian Government in late 2013, the Oral History Project began collecting wartime stories from people around the Kokoda Track area, between Oro and Central provinces. I was a part of that research team that included John Waiko, the first Papua New Guinean doctorate in humanities, and Maclaren Hiari, a well-known Oro historian and former PNG Museum officer in the 1990s. The research team was led by Jonathan Ritche of Deakin University who compiled a book titled *Voices from the War: Papua New Guinean Stories of the Kokoda Campaign, World War Two* (2015). The first of three subsequent books from the project, I also placed it under glass as a museum object in the centre of the Tuari Helalodia Exhibition.

The Oral History Project (2013-2019) was the PNG Government's official attempt to record Papua New Guinean stories of WWII. As Ritchie notes, most accounts by outsiders describe the war in PNG as a conflict between external forces; the inhabitants are commonly marginalized

and rendered as two-dimensional – 'angels' or 'devils'. The Oral History Project attempts to restore primacy and agency to Papua New Guineans by creating opportunities to participate in the reimagining of the histories of WWII (Ritchie 2017: 127). Ritchie uses the term 'reimagining', and I would add that the projects intention was also to 'recalibrate' the narrative of WWII and shift the focus to Papua New Guinean memories of the war. In this sense, Ako's biography of Moide is a significant contribution to the kind of Papua New Guinean narratives that the PNG Museum wanted to bring to public consciousness.

Ako, a relative and close confidant of Moide's, was able to write and publish the biography by 2012 just three years before Moide passed away at the age of 88. Moide was of a mixed parentage of Pari, in what is now Central Province and Kiwai in what is now Western Province, and voluntarily enlisted with the Papuan Infantry Batallion (PIB) at Konedobu in Port Moresby. A unit of the Australian Army, the PIB comprised mainly of native soldiers. The Australian Army began enlisting native men for the PIB in early 1940 even before war had come to the territories.

Moide was physically imposing for his age and was able to convince Australian recruiters that he was 19 when he was in fact only 16 years old. He was one of the youngest to enlist with the PIB in 1940 as most men who enlisted before him were police officers before the war and joined at a time when recruiting had just begun, and the pressures of war had not yet compelled the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) to start using more coercive methods for recruiting soldiers, carriers, and labourers.

Young Moide enlisted with the PIB without informing his parents, Moide Enage and Nevea Gebai. When his mother and father found out two days afterwards, on a Monday, why he had not returned to their home at Pari Village just east of Port Moresby they deplored their son's decision. His distraught mother wailed and instructed Enage to go to Konedobu and retrieve Moide,

> You go to work. But when you come home this afternoon, give him the beating of his life so that he doesn't do such stupidity again. Is he already tired of living at such an early age? Whatever it is, it is not even our war. And who are they supposed to be fighting? Some more taubadas? They all look the same to me anyways, Gebai pleaded (Ako 2012: 44).

The term Gebai uses to refer to white people is *taubada*, being a Motuan term that literally translates to bigman but is used generally to refer to all whites or foreigners. In her distressed sentiments above she makes no difference between whites or Australians and any other of the belligerents of WWII. Moide's reasoning for joining the army is also detailed by Ako. When he initially enlisted, he was an inquisitive young kid who was amazed by the marching soldiers he and his friends witnessed at Konedobu one afternoon after school. He and his friends, and many other onlookers, admired the native men being trained by the *taubadas* (Ako 2012: 32-3).

As the events of the war progress, the PIB are moved to be stationed at the forward operating base at Bisiatabu on the Sogeri Plateau. This is closer to Owers Corner from whence they would begin walking across the Kokoda Track to Oro to engage the Japanese advancing from the Northern Beaches. Ako writes that one weekend Moide's parents visit him at Bisiatabu and tell him about the hardships everyone is facing back in Pari and that all Motuan villages near Port

Moresby were being evacuated to other villages further afield because of the risk of Japanese air raids. Pari villagers were being temporarily resettled at Gaire, another Motuan village about 30 kilometres east. Hearing this Moide began to despise the Japanese and wanted very much to vent his anger on them by using his Army training on them and firing on them with his Bren gun which he had been trained over the last few months to operate. Moide thought to himself,

> What has my family done to you to deserve this? My poor parents don't even know what you look like; my father has never stolen from your garden; or killed a wallaby or pig from your hunting grounds; or raided your villages. We don't even know you but yet, you have seen fit to inflict this upon us. Whatever quarrel you have with the *taubada* has now become my quarrel. In your haste to deal with the *taubada,* you have intruded into my family's boundary and disrupted the harmony of my father's house. And for this, you will pay (Ako 2012: 77).

Moide now personalizes his motivations for fighting against the Japanese. He has no inkling of the broader political reasons for the war between the Allies and the Japanese but the social displacements and disharmony in his village caused by the Japanese bombings is reason enough for him now to fight against them.

An earlier example of the kind of scholarship in focus here is August Kituai's *My Gun, My Brother: The World of the Papua New Guinea Colonial Police, 1920-1960* (1998). From Madang Province, the late Kituai was a history professor at UPNG and was my initial Supervisor when I did an Honours in Historiography there in 2015. He quickly took an interest in my research proposal given my focus on Papua New Guinean perspectives of WWII.

My Gun, My Brother is concerned with the indigenous policemen who served under Australian kiaps (patrol officers) in the territories of Papua and New Guinea during the four decades between 1920 and 1960. On the eve of war in 1942 there were about three hundred fifty policemen in Papua and more than a thousand in New Guinea. Many of these men were recruited or conscripted by ANGAU at the outbreak of war. For men who had been exposed to the prestige and pay of working as a police officer, the decision to continue serving was perhaps easier or even desirable (Kituai 1998: 84). John Boino of Obea village, Tufi, Oro, was the youngest man to enlist with ANGAUs police force in 1941. Kituai notes that Boino and his elder brother left their village at a young age and were living at Buna Station when war broke out. The sense of hopelessness presented by the war for those who had left their villages was the circumstance of his recruitment (Kituai 1998: 53).

Men who joined one of the fighting factions during WWII did so for various reasons. Paliau Maloat, more well known in Melanesian literature as being the head of a so-called millenarian movement in Manus after the war, joined the New Guinea Police Force in 1928. In January of 1942 Paliau was the highest-ranking officer based in Rabaul and had to flee to avoid capture when the Japanese landed. In August 1943 he surrendered and was forced to supervise the native population on behalf of the Japanese until an Allied air raid in 1944 gave him the chance to escape again. After the war he was arrested for collaboration, but he was never charged (Otto 2020). Kavon Kekes is another Manusian who served with both the Japanese and Americans. His

grandson, Ephraim Kavon, was my host for my one year of fieldwork in Tol. Ephraim says of his grandfather that,

> He was a mechanic engaged with the Japanese Construction Battalion. Later, when the Americans came and took over, he worked with them to build what is now Momote Airport. After the war he went into politics and became the first Manusian to be their president when we were still under Wewak District. Paliau took his seat in the 1960s.

Many of the men from around Wide Bay, some of whose relatives gave me their stories, were plantation workers or Luluais and Tultuls[2] prewar whose reasons for joining either side must be investigated beyond colonial tropes like Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels. I analyse this trope in Section 2, Chapter 1.

Nelson (1978) documents ANGAU recruitment methods which become increasingly more coercive and even violent when the need for labourers and carriers became more pressing after August 1942. Rogerson (2012: 1) states that there are contradictions surrounding the history of the Papuan carriers concerning their recruitment, treatment, and working conditions. She investigates why such negative stories are absent from the Australian memory and how the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel moniker of the native carrier does not properly represent the gamut of indigenous experiences of WWII. Riseman (2010:172) critiques stereotypical notions of 'the loyal Papuan' and looks closer at the coercive and discriminatory practices of ANGAU and the Australian Army during the war.

Looking to other parts of the Pacific, *Solomon Islanders in World War II: An Indigenous Perspective* by Anna Annie Kwai (2017) follows the growing trend of flipping the narrative of WWII through ethnohistorical research that foreground indigenous voices and experiences. Kwai asserts that 'the dominant narratives of the participation of islanders in the war are often rendered as simplistic representations of local wartime 'loyalty' to the Allied forces, and especially to the Solomon Islands' British colonial masters' (2017: 3). Camacho, a Chamorro scholar from the Mariana Islands, counters similar wartime stereotypes like the 'noble savage' or the 'ignoble savage' who were 'generous' and 'hospitable' to the Americans. Camacho's concern with these stereotypes is that the racial and racist dimensions of American loyalty were not just descriptive in nature but were also prescriptive, in that American loyalty worked simultaneously to accept and distance the colonized from the colonizer (2011: 29).

Such stereotypes are prohibitive to a proper understanding of local experiences of the war in the Pacific so much so to make Falgout, Poyer & Carucci (2008) write that Micronesians, like other indigenous peoples, are 'missing in action' from the written accounts of WWII. They further note that Micronesians' stories reflect their position of being caught in the middle of a foreign war – one initiated, designed, and led by others. As some elders tellingly remark, 'Japan and America went to war with each other; Micronesians were simply in the way' (Falgout et al.:

[2] A Luluai was a government-appointed position within the Australian colonial administration. A system adopted from the Germans, Luluais were normally chiefs or bigman appointed to represent their village and assisted the kiap when he passed through to conduct a village census, pass on important information and so on. Like the Luluai, the Tultul was a man of similar influence in the village appointed by the kiap to assist the Luluai. A Paramount Luluai or Waitpus was also appointed to represent all Luluais and Tultuls in a particular area, like Wide Bay for instance.

104). This notion of being 'caught in the middle' is also one that many people in my fieldsites have expressed and I consider a similar idiom in Chapter 1.

Camacho specifies two general overlapping categories of how WWII history is written – soldiers seeking the utilitarian value of military history on the one hand, and scholars observing the educational value on the other (2011: 5). This thesis fits the mould of the latter and takes an ethnographic approach to investigating its subject matter. In Chapter 1 I have also drawn from the historiography of oral accounts collected and stored by the PNG Museum through the Oral History Project, making use of the repository in the way the project had intended (cf. Ritchie 2017: 130).

Given the strong bond of friendship between PNG and Australia that for many is epitomized through the general support of locals for the Allies during WWII, the PNG Museum is also concerned with how that aspect of history is taught in PNG schools. From the Upper Primary grades to the Lower Secondary grades, the broad brushstrokes of PNGs place in the world are taught. Prehistory, ancient history, colonial history, and modern history are taught from Grade 8, progressively becoming more detailed by Grade 10.

In the following I make observations about the history curriculum material from the Flexible Open and Distance Education (FODE) division of PNGs National Department of Education (NDoE). The education system uses a unified national syllabus, so this material is more or less how the subject is taught throughout the country. Grade 11 Social Science stream students are provided curriculum material that includes a separate module for WWII in the Pacific, but the material does very little to represent the experiences of Papuans and New Guineans during the war. The curriculum notes that an unknown number of Papuans and New Guineans served, and that more than 18,000 natives were killed during the war. A single paragraph on *The Papua New Guineans* states,

> Our people were seriously affected by the war. **The war was not our war but it was fought on our soil**. Few understood what the war was about but many fought bravely for the Australians and the Americans and some for the Japanese. Papua New Guineans were valuable soldiers because of their skill in jungle fighting (my emphasis) (FODE: 111).

The material lists the disadvantages and advantages of WWII in PNG. Some listed disadvantages include the destruction of the environment, gardens and properties and the trauma of seeing dead bodies, rotten corpses, and disfigured men (FODE: 117). It should be noted that Waiko (2003 & 2011) is the only Papua New Guinean scholar who appears as part of the listed source materials for the Grade 11 curricula.

The NDoE places a lot of emphasis on the teaching of WWII history but little on the specificities of local perspectives and experiences. This is reflected in a general indifference by most younger generations to the war. The government tries to invigorate a sense of pride in the country's war history through certain gazetted holidays like Remembrance Day. Also known as Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels Day, it falls on 23 July. Kokoda Day falls on 3 November.[3] These are

[3] Remembrance Day marks the 'baptism of fire' on 23 July 1942 and Kokoda Day marks the retaking of Kokoda Station by the Australian Army from the Japanese Army on 3 November 1942.

mostly government affairs and official services are held at one of the three Commonwealth war cemeteries in the country or more haphazardly at former battlefield sites like Gorari or Tol. There is no fixed program in the national curriculum for these days so if no extracurricular activities are organized by individual schools, then most in other parts of the country will give the days off for students.

The Massacre at Tol

In the historiography of WWII in PNG, the events that transpired at Tol Plantation are not as well known. The South Seas Detachment or Japanese Army of the Imperial Japanese Army landed at Rabaul on 23 January 1942 and proceeded to take it over in a week. The 2/22 Battalion, codenamed Lark Force, were defending Rabaul but were outnumbered by the invaders. The Australian defenders were quickly overwhelmed and forced to withdraw, with many soldiers, and some civilians who had not evacuated earlier, escaping over the Gazelle Peninsula. They were hoping to be rescued at friendlier ports on the south coast of what is now East New Britain Province (ENBP) or at ports at Talasea in what is now the West New Britain Province (WNBP) side of the island of New Britain.

Japanese patrols were sent to pursue the fleeing Australians along the south coast. According to Gamble (2006: 147) more than two hundred members of Lark Force had crossed the Baining Ranges heading towards Wide Bay. By 3 February 1942 many of these men were captured and by nightfall 170 Australians had been locked inside a large hut at Tol that formerly housed native labourers. Gamble writes that the Australian prisoners were initially treated well but the mood drastically changed the next day. The prisoners, which included Lark Force members and civilian members of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles militia formed in Rabaul, were lined up in groups of six to twelve and tied up together with their thumbs bound tightly. They were marched away to various locations in the bush and coconut groves around Tol and Waitavolo. The Japanese captors then proceeded to bayonet, shoot, and kill the helpless prisoners. It was a mass execution sanctioned by Colonel Masao Kusunose at Rabaul and almost certainly had the approval of Major General Tomitaro Horii. By the time they were done 160 Australian prisoners had been killed (Gamble 2006: 147-57). Somehow six men survived the killings and gave personal accounts of the Japanese atrocities of 4 February 1942 which became known as the Tol Plantation Massacre.

The Australian Army retook control of Tol Plantation in 1943 and in 1945 recovered as many of their skeletal remains as they could and buried them at a temporary cemetery near Masarau, where Gumgum Village is today. These corpses were later reinterred at Bitapaka Commonwealth War Cemetery in the provincial centre of Rabaul but many more remain where they fell around Tol and Waitavolo.

I spent the first week of my fieldwork in Tol walking around with my host, Kavon, as he

showed me the many places around the station area where recent road and building constructions had upturned bones.

> ‘Bun pulap lo displa hap (This place is full of bones)’, Kavon remarked in Tok Pisin as we walked around one day.
>
> ‘Em ol bun blo wo taim tasol? (Are they just bones from the wartime?)’, I asked.
>
> ‘Bro, em ol bun blo wo tasol. Ol lain blo yumi lo Sulka na Baining no sa planim ol daiman blo ol lo displa ol hap ya na tu ol bun ya stap antap tumas olsem ol ino planim ol gut tu. Olgeta man yumi stap lo hia save olsem em ol bun blo ol Ostralia tasol.
>
> (Brother, these bones are from the war. Our people from Sulka and Baining do not bury their dead around this [station] area and furthermore these bones were found at too shallow a depth like they were not even buried properly. We the people who live here all know that these bones can only be Australian)’, Kavon replied.
>
> ‘So sapos em ol bun blo ol Ostralia, yupla sa lukim ol tewel blo ol tu? (So if these are Australian bones do you guys see their ghosts too?)’
>
> ‘Ahhh’ Kavon exclaimed, as if he was in disbelief about the question I had just asked him.
>
> ‘Planti stori. But wanpla gutpla man yu mas go stori wantaim pastaim em wanpla tambu blo mi. Nem blo em Geso. (There are too many stories. But one good person you must go and talk with first is an in-law of mine. His name is Geso.

A Sulka man, Jacob Geso is a *glasman* (literally ‘glass man’ in Tok Pisin and is a spirit medium) who features more in Chapter 3. He provides insights into the spiritual world of Tol and how the ghosts of war are figured in it. Going to Tol I was interested in the social and spiritual implications of the mass deaths there. The many corpses left by the war have certainly not gone unnoticed by people living in Tol in the years after WWII. I spent a year, between 1 April 2021 and 1 April 2022, carrying out my fieldwork in and around Tol and the wider Pomio.

Pomio is the largest but most underdeveloped district in ENBP. The province has three other districts: Gazelle, Kokopo and Rabaul. Pomio District comprises five Local Level Government (LLG) areas which are further subdivided into smaller government council areas called Wards. Tol is Ward 15 of the Sinivit Rural LLG. In 2023 the leaders of the Baining Tribe, comprising its six clans,[4] successfully pushed for their own district, making Baining the fifth district in ENBP.

Tol is located on the shores of Henry Reid Bay (known locally as Homhovulu), which is the inner reaches of the much larger Wide Bay that forms the southern side of the ‘throat’ of New Britain Island – Open Bay forming the upper part of this topographical ‘throat’. Other tribes that occupy Wide Bay include the Nambatu Mengen (Tok Pisin for Mengen 2) and the Tomoip. The Sulka and Baining territories are contiguous and were the two groups I had the most contact with while living in Tol.

[4] The six Baining clans are Mali, Simbali, Uramat, Qaqet, Kairak and Makolkol.

The name Tol is a diminutive of the (Simbali) Baining name of the surrounding mountain ridge, spelled *Tholia* but pronounced Ro-li-ya. This ridgeline rises some 200-250 meters and forms the backdrop of the thin Tol-Masarau coastline. A larger cul-de-sac indent that skirts into the base of the ridgeline and back out to the foreshore, accommodates the school grounds and two Sulka settler villages – Gumgum behind the high school and Koki west of it.

Tol's development began as a coconut plantation in the early twentieth century. The land was first bought from Burakei, the Luluai of Bulus Village, by an Australian planter named George Nease (Pomio Patrol Reports, 1967-8: 32).[5] The station area is a three-kilometre stretch of littoral land area from Masarau in the east to Malan Point in the west. Malan is the Sulka name for the tip of the promontory named by the Germans as Zungen or Tongue Point – perhaps a description of the part of the human anatomy they thought it resembled. The Baining name for the point is Madaingepes, referring to the underground outflow of a stream at the point. Some older maps list Masarau as Waitavolo. One interpretation is that Waitavolo is a localized form of the description of the sparkly white sandy beaches which Australian planters exclaimed as 'whiter flow' when one apparently grabbed a handful and saw the fine white grains pouring out through the gaps in his fingers. This story was given to me by a Baining elder.

Sulka informants tell me that Waitavolo is a term in their language which was spelled *Weitavlo* or *Veitavlo*. The prefix *wei-* or *vei-* means sand and *–tavlo* means rising as in a slope. It is a descriptive term for the sandy coastline and the angle of the beach's slope. The current place name, Masarau, is of (Simbali) Baining origin, from *Mẽsrau – mẽs* meaning food or 'to eat' and *rau* referring to small crabs that can be found along dry creek beds or by the sea. It is the Baining term for a nearby creek where the small crabs can still be collected and eaten. Some Baining interlocutors have told me that Masarau is a mispronunciation of the name, Master Ross, who, along with Mrs Ross, bought the plantation from Nease in 1928 or 1929 (Pomio Patrol Reports, 1967-8: 32).

The multiple toponyms and their associations to different places around Tol are an indicator of the contentious nature of land dealings in the area. Baining and Sulka tensions over their border lands go back hundreds of years and have often resulted in intertribal skirmishes.

The first logging companies to arrive in the 1960s were Japanese but Tammisto (2010: 44) notes that from the 1990s most of the logging in the Wide Bay area was conducted by Niu Gini Lumber, a subsidiary of the Malaysian logging giant, Rimbunan Hijau. Today Tol Station lies at the crossroads of several district and national government schemes. In 2005 it was selected by the former Member of Parliament (MP) for Pomio, Paul Tiensten, to be a Growth Centre as part of the Pomio Economic Development Strategy (2005-2012) (see Tammisto 2010: 44). Under the national government's Public Private Partnership program, resource developers were supposed to link up and maintain road networks in the Pomio District in exchange for logging concessions. As part of the now-failed Special Agricultural Business License concept the Ili-Wawas Road Project was agreed upon and the Department of Environment and Conservation

[5] Patrol Officer, Davies, notes the name George Neas(?) but the spelling is unclear. I have standardized it in the above text.

(now the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority) issued an agro-forestry permit to Tzen Niugini to carry out logging followed immediately by oil palm plantations and smallholder estates.

Simbali and Mali Baining landowners hold smallholder oil palm estates around Tol and the neighbouring villages of Kauvademki (Ward 14) and Marunga (Ward 13). The largest estates are owned by Tzen Niugini who employs around 3,000 workers from all over the country. The number of company employees more than triples the population of Ward 14 surpassing even the population of Tol whose population increases twofold with the high school students and the logging company workers' compound at Masarau. A census I conducted in October of 2021 indicates a total population of 1,128 and 523 households. My census covered Tol, Masarau, including the logging company worker compounds, the Sulka settler villages of Koki and Gumgum and the nearby Simbali Baining village of Bulus.

Bones of the foreign war dead, and ghosts, in and around Tol Plantation in Pomio have contended with various stages of local developments as well as existing in a more heterogenous society than my other fieldsite of Gorari. How does this reflect in local interactions with these foreign entities? Does this diversity efface any comprehensive sense of a singular cosmological supposition in which 'foreign' ghosts of war abound or do they take on more complex and stratified levels of existence and interactions with different groups of people?

The Battlegrounds of Gorari

Nelson (2003: 113) notes that war stimulated movement in Papua and New Guinea, and after the Japanese landed at Rabaul in January 1942 it certainly increased traffic on the Kokoda Track. He continues that as the demand for labour in Port Moresby and on the rubber plantations (then being pushed to maximum production) increased, ANGAU field officers were told to shift from persuasion to conscription. Villages like Gorari that were along the Buna-Kokoda Road were heavily leaned upon. Men from Gorari and the surrounding hamlets volunteered or were conscripted as carriers, labourers, soldiers, and police officers.

Kaki Simbari from Nambisota Hamlet in Gorari joined the 126th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Division of the American Army. This regiment was never actually involved in the fighting on the Kokoda Track. Following a different mountain route called the Kapa Kapa Trail which ran almost parallel to the Kokoda Track, the American regiment attempted a flanking manoeuvre on the Japanese but underestimated the ruggedness of the route they had plotted. The route began from the southern side of the ranges at Kapa Kapa Village, an American mispronunciation of the Motuan village of Gaba Gaba. The regiment consisted of more than 900 men and some local guides. I spoke with Simbari's son, Reginald, at Nambisota on 22 September 2022. Reginald recounts in Tok Pisin,

> Papa em bin polisman bifo lo wo na em bin stap lo Gili Gili lo Milen Bay Provins taim

> wo kamap na ol kisim em lo hap lo eskotim ol Amerika lo wokabaut lo Owen Stanley Ranges lo narapla rot ron sait lo Kokoda Trek.
>
> My father was a policeman before the war and was based at Gili Gili in Milne Bay Province when the war broke out and was there recruited to escort the American regiment and cross the Owen Stanley Ranges on an alternative route running parallel to the Kokoda Track.

He proudly displays his father's medal along with a copy of the book *Ghost Mountain Boys* (Campbell 2007). As the book title suggests, the trail is also aptly nicknamed the Ghost Mountain Track. Many of the American soldiers who trekked it suffered from tropical illnesses, exhaustion, and hunger with a few dying along the way. The route from Gaba Gaba to Jaure and Kumusi on the Oro side is more precipitous and not as well trodden as the Kokoda Track.

Daniel Sakiki, a church pastor from Waju Hamlet in Gorari, converses with me in English and tells me the story of his father's wartime experience,

> My father was a young man and recently engaged. One time he went to Kokoda Station for some of his own business but while he was there some officers recruited him and took him away. His parents, my grandparents, didn't even know. My grandfather sent his younger brother to go look for my father but he died along the Kokoda Track in one of the Koiari villages as he was walking towards Port Moresby to look for my grandfather, his nephew.

Robinson Sakiki, Daniel's father, was a PIB soldier and served in Lae, Rabaul and Buka. Robinson was likely recruited in 1941 when ANGAU officers had to recruit or conscript further afield from Port Moresby. I have noted at least four other soldiers or carriers from around Gorari with at least three locals who served with the Japanese.

As the Japanese marched up to Kokoda Station they met their first resistance on 23 July 1942. This first encounter is known by military historians as the 'baptism of fire' as it was the first exchanges of gun fire by ground troops on mainland New Guinea during WWII.[6] The Australians were on the retreat from then on and they passed through Gorari a day later and were stationed briefly at Oivi on the ridge. By late afternoon on 24 July the Australians (consisting of two depleted platoons of the 39th Battalion, and approximately 50 native members of the PIB as well as carriers) had fallen back to Oivi Creek (James 2006: 397). They escaped under cover of nightfall back towards Kokoda Station, about two to three hours march away.

The next time the two warring parties passed through Oivi and Gorari, the Japanese were on the retreat and there were more significant military exchanges. In what military historians call the Battle of Oivi-Gorari, the actions that occurred between 4 and 11 November resulted in 1,000 dead Japanese soldiers and 133 dead Australian soldiers (James 2006: 400). The fighting here took place within a 12 square kilometre area and left the bodies of dead soldiers around Waju and

[6] James (2006: 407) cites other local accounts, including from Hiari, suggesting that the 'baptism of fire' took place near a different village called Soroputa, east of Awala.

Gorari Hu 4 kilometres south, to Oivi Ridge 5 kilometres west. Most of the Australian war dead from this area were later reinterred at the Bomana Commonwealth War Cemetery. A lot of hand fighting took place around Gorari, where Australian units killed and buried over 500 Japanese. The Japanese dead were buried in common graves, up to ten in one grave (AWM 2024, https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/151113). At the Divune Mass Burial Site 280 Japanese remains are located.

I spent much less time, six months from 6 June to 30 December 2022, at my second fieldsite of Gorari in Oro Province. This was intentional because I was already very familiar with the place through my work with the PNG Museum. I had worked on various Museum projects in Oro since 2014 and I was known by many people in Gorari in that capacity.

The last time I was in Gorari, 2018, there was no electricity but in June of 2021 PNG Power began operating its Divune Hydropower Station. A dam was built at the headwaters of the Divune River where it rushes out from a ravine at the base of the Owen Stanley Ranges. A 3-megawatt hydropower plant was built 2 kilometres south of the damsite adjacent to Waju Hamlet. Popondetta Town, the provincial capital of Oro, was the first place to benefit from the new power station while Kokoda Station is soon to be connected to the grid. In April of 2022 PNG Power connected service lines to several nearby hamlets in Gorari, mainly those houses next to the road. These new developments have caused tensions between most of the clans of Gorari over ownership of the project site. The matter is unresolved and before the land mediators and lands court magistrate in Popondetta.

Gorari is located on the linguistic border of the Kaina and the Hunjara tribes. Most of the people here are fluent in both languages. Traditionally, the two language groups could be distinguished by their type of clothing: Hunjara men and women wore tapa whereas for the Kaina only men wore tapa while women wore *grasskirts* (a traditional piece of clothing made of dried grass or leaves and worn by women). Though clothing options have certainly modernised, the distinction is still an important one that locals are keen to make explicit.

Administratively, Gorari falls within Ward 10 of the Kokoda LLG. The ward covers the surrounding hamlets of Ifafu, Hovea, Nambisota, Havaki 1, Havaki 2, Havaki 3, Sisireta, Avongo, Ufutumu, Handari, Waju Ingonofu, Waju Ainthosusu, Waju Angerahane, Kanari-Kanawari, Wasara, Jopure, Onseta, Oivi, Gorari Hu and Gorari Kombu. My fieldwork census of Ward 10 indicates 342 households and a total population of 1,858 split between the Kaina and Hunjara tribes and 14 clans and sub-clans.

Kokoda Station is the LLG headquarters and is a popular placename in the history of WWII in PNG. The station was established in 1904 and was an important halfway stop and mail exchange point for the overland route called the Kokoda Track which connects Port Moresby to Oro Province. Kokoda Station became the ambition of the Japanese Army in 1942. After establishing their base in Rabaul in February, they later launched attacks on mainland New Guinea. On 21 July they landed on the shores of Gona, Sanananda and Buna and proceeded to march west with the aim of taking control of Kokoda Station with its airstrip and from there crossing the Kokoda Track to reach the territorial headquarters of Port Moresby. My research in my chosen fieldsites

follows their movements from ENBP to Oro and the deaths that resulted from their military engagements with the Allies along the way.

Ethnography of War

In my thesis, the war in focus is radically different from the traditional warfare of Melanesian anthropology. By and large, enmities and alliances had already been formed among external political groups by the time the war arrived in PNG. These groups then make concerted efforts to secure the support of locals or discourage them from supporting their enemies. The places of fighting during WWII were sites of perspectival differentiation where group identities were violently delineated from each other. This delineation of group identities and alliances, however, happened more haphazardly among Papuans and New Guineans who had to make decisions either voluntarily, under duress or by necessity. Their decisions must be examined individually and consider underlying cultural specificities. Native policemen for instance who voluntarily enlisted to join the Australian army, stood to gain much in terms of wealth and social status from their involvement in the war. A similar rationale that many men had for joining the police force in the first place was to speed up achieving a bigman status by bypassing traditional structures and gaining symbolic power (Kituai 1998: 70-83).

In Moide's story his decision to fight with the Australian Army against the Japanese is ultimately rationalised in terms of 'payback' for the disharmony and dislocation of his family caused by their bombing of the Port Moresby area. Payback, Trompf (1994: 24) notes, follows a notional framework categorised by a 'retributive logic' common in most Melanesian religions. This follows principles of reciprocity that can also be found in the space of exchange and peace-making (Trompf 1994: 97). The motives behind payback and reciprocity are related to normative explanations of significant events (Trompf 1994: 24) and as Harrison (1993: 63) points out may concern land and other economic resources. The closer two groups are, the more likely they are to be in competition for them, meaning that enemies are usually neighbouring clans and tribes.

Most Papuans and New Guineans in 1942 generally did not know about or understand the reasons for the political tensions in Europe or the bombing of Pearl Harbour. From afar, all foreigners were classed under local categories like *taubada*, as expressed by Moide's mother. Moide later hinges his dislike and inclination to fight against the Japanese on their incursions on his land. That is, he only defines them as an enemy based on aggressions made in physical proximity to his land and kin. It should be noted that by the time Moide expresses these thoughts and rationale he had already undergone significant training as a PIB soldier and had the means to carry it out.

In Section 4, Chapter 1 on 'Alleged Collaborators', I give an example of how a Kaiva 'gang' frames prewar enmities with Australian missionaries and administration to align themselves with the Japanese and exact their idea of payback. The arrival of the Japanese in 1942 destabilised the

power of the former coloniser and provided the means for this alleged 'gang' to perhaps fulfil political intentions that were not previously possible as colonial subjects.

Harrison examines the ideological uses to which warfare and aggression are put in Melanesian political life. In the Western discourse on war and aggression he notes the tendency to associate war with the order of nature. That is to say, the identification of war with the realm of nature is itself a symbolic and ideological practice of a particular historical tradition and serves specific moral and political ends (1993: 2). For Hobbes, war is the natural condition out of which social life threatens constantly to regress. The central problem then becomes the maintenance of peace and order rather than the maintenance of violence and conflict. Hobbes' explicit political ends was the creation of a central authority, the state, to maintain peace within itself and among others outside of it. Harrison notes that the state of nature is therefore never abolished but simply raised from the level of relations between individuals to the levels of relations between collectivities. The state is an individual writ large, guided only by its own self-interest, protecting its own welfare but at liberty to do anything against others to further its own good (Harrison 1993: 3).

Overtly, the discernible political identities that had carriage of the objectives of WWII in the Pacific were principally Australian, American, and Japanese. For those Papuans and New Guineans at the time who enlisted in an army, their motivations cannot be framed by the same nationalistic models of the major belligerents. The rationale for any Papuan and New Guinean involved with any of the fighting faction must be understood through culturally specific and situation-specific lenses. And as I will show in Chapter 1, many people did intentionally evade capture or conscription by hiding out the war period in the bush.

I suggest here that the fighting during WWII was between others of higher technological capabilities and distinct sociopolitical groupings while the loosely held collective under the Territory of Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea became implicated in the war simply because of their subjectivity. Prewar, the legal status of peoples in the territories was always ambiguous being racially and relationally determined by the coloniser. E.P. Wolfers (1975: 2) for instance has noted that 'within colonial society, the fact of belonging or not belonging to a particular racial group has tended to determine the range of opportunities open to each individual, the roles that he or she might play, and his or her status.' Wolfers extends that in that period, 'Few Papua New Guineans have ever known that 'intimate enmity' bred of intense and protracted contact with the colonisers' culture which stimulated nationalism among the *évolués* in other colonies' (1975: 9). The Papua New Guinean equivalent of a large educated middle class of native elites who might 'conscionably' take up arms alongside or against the coloniser came after WWII.

For Marilyn Strathern wealth exchanges, of the kind in her Hagen context, afford a facility for the mobilisation of allies in warfare and for peaceful resolution. This rests on a general mechanism: the mediation of relations between persons and thus the value they have for one another, through material items (1985: 123). That is, the act of exchanging translates exchange items into a value representative of the person where the transaction itself represents the

relationship between the two parties. Here Strathern challenges the idea that war and peace are vertical scale shifts, as in Hobbes' framing, but can rather be found on the same scale. In her conceptualization of war and peace in Hagen society, the two are convertible forms of exchange transformed by either an exchange of wealth or of blows (1985: 124).

Here I am interested in these scale shifts and exchanges and the kinds of sociality that they create. Apart from a historical connection to WWII, by being the physical setting for battles, the quality of relations people have to the bones of foreign war dead and the ghosts of war connects them to extraneous networks of relations in ways becoming more apparent to them with the popularity of war tourism and commemoration and ongoing human remains recovery work. For many people in my fieldsites these represent alternative means of economic benefit and development. The defining characteristics of former battlefield sites are shaped by the history and materiality of war which for landowners become like other natural resources in their environment that they may also claim the right to benefit from (cf. Victoria Stead 2018).

Tol and Gorari are places that former combatant nations, and their people, continue to revisit to commemorate the war and fallen heroes and to search for unrecovered war dead. These historical landscapes of generalized violence and mass displacement, in which many bones of the foreign war dead are still unrecovered, and the ghosts of war abound, denotes the temporal continuity of the war that landowners, as 'resource owners', are configured into in the present. The kind of exchanges of wealth, or services, that occur in these former battlefield landscapes might thus fall into a category of social relationships characterized by ceremonial exchange which according to Fitzpatrick (1980: 103) occur precisely in the space of dispute settlements. I am suggesting here that the kinds of exchanges that occur there between locals, the PNG Government and foreign others are processual lateral scale shifts between war and peace that follows the trajectory of reconciliation that began at the end of open conflict in 1945. However, while former combatant nations seek to bring closure for their war dead, account for their deaths and realize the finality of a temporally extended war, landowners may perceive their efforts to do so as opportunities to extend relations in ways that are beneficial to them in the present. I discuss this further in chapters 4 and 5.

The events of WWII stand as a nexus that divides the ethnographic scene into a time before and after it. Understanding how Papuans and New Guineans manoeuvred or aligned themselves during WWII shows patterns of enmity, alliance, and peace-making which I suggest is ongoing today. The violent group delineations of WWII show how Papuans and New Guineans came out of it realising that they too needed to mobilise themselves into larger political groups than clans and tribes and organise themselves in ways like the former combatant nations of WWII if they wanted to secure their lands and interests. Accordingly, Harrison makes the point that in Melanesia it is not so much groups that make war, but war that makes groups. It is through conflict that groups separate themselves as distinct entities (1993: 18). Indeed, it has been suggested that WWII helped foster a sense of common identity and even an early form of nationalism, especially among the Papua New Guineans whose lives were most affected by the conflict (Moutu, pers. comm. 2014, referenced in Ritchie 2017: 125).

Methodology

When my supervisor and I were discussing my project, we agreed that a multi-sited approach would be appropriate given the sweeping nature of WWII. I was already familiar with Gorari but chose Tol precisely because of my unfamiliarity with the place. The military events that occurred at Gorari fall under the well-known Kokoda Campaign but is located 18 kilometres east of the official start of the 96-kilometre Kokoda Track that attracts a lot of tourism today. This fact alone shapes local perspectives about being peripheral to the perceived greater economic benefits along the Track proper. The events at Tol are more obscure in the historiography of WWII in PNG, being a massacre of Australian soldiers. Even though the materiality of the war found in these two landscapes are similar, there are significant differences in the way the two places are remembered today. The Battle of Gorari was part of a series of Australian victories while pushing the Japanese Army back to the Oro coastline while the Tol Plantation Massacre represents an Australian loss.

As a Papua New Guinean and a PNG Museum officer, I have strong personal and professional connections to both fieldsites. While this was an asset for me in terms of organising logistical details like accommodation, finding local contacts in the villages and other fieldwork arrangements, I was also aware of the limits of doing 'anthropology at home'. I worried if I could adhere to Mead's advice for instance to keep an open mind with looking, listening, and recording in astonishment and wonder what I would be incapable of guessing (1977: IX). Would my familiarity with Gorari and the Kokoda Track area aid or hinder a greater conceptual reflexivity in my writing? How could I counteract my own biases? (cf. Strathern's chapter *The Limits of Auto-Anthropology* 1987: 17-8).

I am from the island of New Britain where the fieldsite of Tol Plantation is. The Pomio District shares a border with the East Nakanai District of WNBP where my village of Ewasse is located. While the border between the two provinces was still closed, from January to March 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, I took the opportunity to go and wait in my village when the provincial airport of Hoskins was reopened in mid-January 2021. Tokua, the provincial airport in ENBP was still closed.

The Nakanai Ranges are a natural border between East Nakanai and Pomio in the south but a coastal road connects East Nakanai to the Gazelle District through the Open Bay area. On the WNBP side, roads and bridges are better maintained by the New Britain Palm Oil Limited Company up until Pandi River. The ENBP side is a logging road used by Open Bay Timbers which keeps it useable only for its large timber trucks. From Open Bay there is another logging road that runs through the 'throat' of New Britain, the thinnest part of the island, to Wide Bay. I planned to drive across from Ewasse but the ENB police had set up a roadblock at Pandi River. Forced to wait for the border to reopen, I enjoyed some downtime in my village. It was not long

before I found relatives who used to work for Tzen Niugini in Tol – three uncles and a classificatory grandfather of mine. They gave me up-to-date information about the road from Open Bay south to Wide Bay. Their stories about going back and forth between Tol and Ewasse made me more confident about going there myself.

In choosing my fieldsite in New Britain I wanted to be somewhere close to home but not too close to my village. I was acutely aware of the kind of inertia and disinterest that arises from too much familiarity. Furthermore, as a Nakanai man, I know my clan, Gararua, my kin, and the bounds of my village. Even though I cannot speak my *tokples* and I am seen as somewhat different from my village-dwelling kin because my father is from East Sepik Province on the mainland of PNG, how I am perceived locally is partly shaped by my Gararua Clan affiliation. This alone could preclude me from collecting information from members of other local clans who may see my investigations as related to land. I needed to do my fieldwork in a place where I could connect with people because of my Nakanai or New Britain identity yet not so close that it would restrict my movements. I needed to be seen as someone familiar who could be trusted yet distant enough that my motives would not be misread as relating to land or resources. I needed to be a kind of neutral insider and Tol seemed a suitable place. There I would be called *wan ailan*, Tok Pisin for 'one island', or *mangi Nakanai*, Tok Pisin for 'Nakanai boy', referring to the tribe they know inhabit the northern side of the eponymous mountain range they see the southern side of.

Before my fieldwork I had never been to ENBP. I had professional contacts and relatives in the provincial centres of Rabaul and Kokopo but not in Tol, that I knew of at the time at least. I asked a friend at the Rabaul Museum for a local contact in Tol and Ephraim Kavon's name was the only one suggested to me. Kavon, who became my host, is from the island province of Manus but grew up in ENBP where his parents worked in the health sector during the 1960s and 70s. He is now settled in Tol where he and his wife, Sona, run a guesthouse they built specifically to cater to human remains recovery missions or to tourists going to commemorate the Tol Plantation Massacre. Given his involvement in the tourism space, he is someone with high visibility in his community. I emailed him in February of 2020 while still on lockdown in Scotland because of the coronavirus pandemic quite expecting not to get any response from him. However, I was surprised when he replied just four days later which meant that Tol had decent mobile network reception despite its rural location. It also meant that Kavon was responsive and a good communicator, a character trait of his I have come to admire and appreciate.

My familiarity with Gorari goes back to 2014 when I was involved in the Oral History Project piloted in Oro. I later became acquainted with Edrick Keke in 2018 during a military heritage survey of the Divune Hydropower Project impact area from Waju to Gorari and up to Oivi Ridge. This impact zone coincides with the battlefield area and we were concerned how the development would affect wartime and traditional heritage sites. Carrying out the survey with me was my colleague, Nick Araho, who hails from the neighbouring Hunjara village of Hanjiri. Araho was the PNG Museum's most senior archaeologist and by the time of my fieldwork he had retired and was living in his village. In December 2020 when I went back to Gorari to reestablish contact with people, Araho came along with me. Through his affinal links with Keke's clan, we

had stayed at Gorari Hu throughout our 2018 survey. I was following that same link back to Gorari Hu and to Keke.

But being well-known as a government officer posed other methodological issues for me. People in Gorari often referred to me as 'officer' and would ask me questions about different government projects the PNG Museum had been involved in implementing in Ward 10 and surrounding areas. The title of 'officer' seemed to transcend my actual role in the PNG Museum and was extended to all other government sectors. People came to me for advice relating to all manner of things from agricultural projects to medical advice. I used my newfound position as a 'resource person' in the ward to trade information – my advice for their stories. Though slightly distracting at times, I was never in short supply of possible interlocutors. However, the high number of people seeking my time did become a slight issue when Keke's wife, Janet, began scolding people for coming to my hut unnecessarily. She had her own idea about people respecting my work. I did not try to discourage her because I did not want to put more demands on her time since she was the one who cooked or served coffee for any guests and relatives who came to our household.

A challenge for studying war or any open conflict is the safety of both the observer and those being observed. However, WWII ended almost 80 years ago and posed little risk in this regard. My fieldsites are also in areas that are not active tribal conflict zones like in some Highlands provinces.

My main concern in doing a study of war was that I might be asking questions that would generate discomfort in my informants. Although I noted in my fieldsites a few very old people who were alive during the war, it was not possible to talk with all of them on account of their infirmity. Most of the people I interacted with at both fieldsites were one or two generations removed from the war.

Throughout my thesis, I have prefaced some of my chapters with poems that introduce the subject matter of the rest of the sections of each chapter. At times of rest and contemplation while on fieldwork I would write poems. The lines and stanzas of my poems, many unwritten, were like short summaries of the ideas, people, places, or things that would feature later in my report. After an especially bad bout of malaria in my first year of fieldwork in Tol, I wrote a poem about the deadly tropical disease and reflected on how it killed many soldiers during WWII. While writing up my thesis I used poetry to make commentary on the subject or ideas my chapter would expound. The writing of poems is for me a process of reflexivity and a heuristic device to allow for the exploration of wider ethnographic issues (cf. Mattia Fumanti 2023: 499). I use the writing of poems as a tool for writing and thinking with.

Throughout my fieldwork I have used my role in the recovery work of WWII skeletal remains to put me in the kinds of scenario's I wanted to make observations of or talk with my interlocutors about. In many cases my position as a PNG Museum officer made my research 'official government work' in the eyes of people. I was often wearing multiple hats at the same

time – one as a student or researcher. My methodological approach and writing also reflects this tension between my museum work experience and training in history and the ethnographic approach required of my current scholarship.

My approach seeks to blend the New Melanesian Ethnography (NME) (a term first used by Josephides 1991) and New Melanesian History (NMH), a term used by Foster (1995: 2) but attributed to Nicholas Thomas (1991: 3). The NME approach argues for the recognition of radical alterity to create a dichotomy of Us and Them that allows a distinction between the prejudices and presuppositions of anthropologists and of anthropology and the particularities of the societies being studied (Foster 1995: 2). Strathern makes the statement that, '… our thoughts come already formed, that we think through images' and that 'their' ideas must be made to appear through shapes we give to 'our' ideas (1988: 16). The inverse is also true vis-à-vis the 'other', the subaltern as it were, and how they perceive and understand 'us' – the collective 'we' who study them.

Studying WWII in the PNG context brings into relief the kind of tensions in the NME and NMH debate. As many of my interlocutors have postulated, the agents and agencies pertaining to the events of WWII had external origins. In the wartime accounts, some struggle to understand the reasons for the war. Some become aligned, but their rationale is framed according to their own cultural modes and ways of thinking. Some groups of people, like the postwar organisation which features in Chapter 2, have their own cosmological framing and interpretation of WWII that entirely disregards the political and ideological orientations of former combatant nations. My study of WWII in PNG has necessitated a blended approach of NME and NMH, constantly trying to produce appropriate ethnographic descriptions while contending with the enforced nature of the change that is central to the anthropological account.

Outline of Thesis

In the first chapter I examine some experiences of the people on whose lands and surrounding seas WWII was fought in Papua and New Guinea. The four sections of this chapter analyse some idioms through which people remember, interpret, or reinterpret their war histories. The telling narrative that is here explored is that the war was a foreign one which people had to contend with and reacted to in different ways.

The next chapter takes a counter position to the overriding narrative of the previous, where WWII is viewed as a foreign conflict. Here I consider the place of the ghosts of war through the religious beliefs of the Pomio-Kivung Group or Association. The beliefs of this group and their cosmic worldview flips the narrative of the first by reconstituting the geopolitics WWII and locating the origins of the war instead to within Pomio.

Then chapter 3 takes a closer look at the sites of mass death in Tol and Gorari and peoples' social interactions with the bones of the foreign war dead and their associated ghosts. Through

my interlocutors, I describe local spiritual worlds and how the ghosts of war feature in them. These narratives highlight the diversity and richness of socio-religious life in my fieldsites and the ways in which they have accommodated the bones and the ghosts of WWII.

Chapter 4 considers the ways in which relationships to the ghosts of war and bones of the foreign war dead generate relationships with living foreigners. Section 1 provides a reflection of my involvement in human remains recovery work at the former battlefield site of Etoa along the Kokoda Track. Section 2 considers the story of a Japanese war veteran as an example of a foreign other who through his private bone-collecting mission, builds relations with locals in the former battlefield areas in Oro he goes to in search for his comrade's bones.

The final chapter explores the 'legal lives' and 'political lives' of the bones of the foreign war dead in PNG, and the ghosts of war by implication, through the ongoing work of human remains recovery and the work of commemoration. I consider the PNG States' relationship to the bones of the foreign war dead and the ghosts of war. By analyzing PNG Museum laws and working policies relating to the materiality of war, legally defined therein as 'war surplus materials', I try to find a space for the ghosts of war, through their association with bones, in the network of government laws and relations that facilitate their recovery.

Chapter 1 – Papua New Guineans in World War Two

This chapter will examine some experiences of people on whose lands and surrounding seas WWII was fought. The four sections of this chapter analyse some idioms through which people remember, retell, interpret, and reinterpret their war histories. These voices from the war have been described by some as being marginalized, peripheral, or unaccounted for in military and archival records or official and popular histories. Yet they have been stored in memories, passed on, and given new meanings and values through different cultural and religious lenses. The stories in this chapter focus on the decisions people made about loyalty and allegiances under pressure and in the chaos created by multiple and competing spheres of influence.

The first section analyzes a metaphor, 'mit in a sanwitch' (meat in a sandwich in Tok Pisin) co-opted by people in Oro Province to describe their positionality during the war. For many of these people of the wartime generation, and the generations after, the war is seen as a foreign war, not of their own making and will. The second section looks at the stories and experiences of Papuans and New Guineans who served as carriers, involved in movement of supplies, and partly carer positions, moving the sick and wounded, that somewhat invert the colonial master-servant relationship between Australia and PNG. These carriers become immortalized in the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels trope popularized by the Australian media and the iconography of the war, but which betrays a wider appreciation of Papuan and New Guinean experiences and perspectives. The trope eclipses the possibility of a full understanding of Papua New Guinean roles and motives during the war. Section three will look at some experiences of native soldiers. The last section will deal with the, perhaps misunderstood, dilemma of people accused as collaborators or traitors and imprisoned or executed by armies imposing their own laws.

Section 1 – Mit In A Sanwitch

A common metaphor that people in Oro Province have used to describe their unfavourable position, or that of their ancestors, during the war is of being like 'mit in a sanwitch'. This was a phrase I heard being used frequently in interviews or when talking informally with people during the Voices from the War Project.

Newman Mongagi is one such interviewee who uses the metaphor to reflect how his people were disenfranchised by the war foremost because they had no part in its inception and spreading to their shores. He is a middle-aged man from Sanananda Village on the Northern Beaches of Oro. He is a retired public servant, having lived and worked in Port Moresby for some time. Most notably, Mongagi served as Premier of Oro Province between 1988 and 1989. He is well-educated and is a bigman in his district and province but humbly describes himself now as a village man. A bespectacled and neatly presented man, Mongagi sits on a plastic chair in an open

area of his village and retells his stories in English. He says he will give the stories told to him by his father who was in his early 90s when he passed away in 2013. Before he conveys his late father's story he makes this authoritative statement,

> Firstly, I would like to say [that] this is not what my father told me but this is straight from me as Newman Mongagi, one of the leaders of this village and of the province. I would like to say that Oro Province and Papua New Guinea was not part of this war, and to be frank it's none of our business. Therefore, this information here, I would like it to be taken as [a representation of] our province, Sanananda, Buna, Gona, the [Beachheads, in which] we must be treated or spoken about as a meat in a sandwich. We were meat in a sandwich, because we were not part of this war and we knew nothing about this war. So, this is how I would like to start. It is not our business and it is not our interest in the past, that's how I took it. To talk about the history of Papua New Guinea and especially Oro Province and Buna, Sanananda, and Gona (Mongagi 2016).

Mongagi clearly distinguishes between his father's story and the a posteriori statement he makes above. He says that his people were simply caught up in a war that was 'not their business' and not in their interest and for which they had no idea about the reasons for the war. Mongagi asserts his perspective as representative of the Oro and Papua New Guinean view of the war. How much did his father and his people really know and accept of the war that was approaching their land? What messages about the war were they receiving and from whom were these messages from? Is the 'mit in a sanwitch' metaphor, used by people today, an accurate idiomatic expression of the wartime generations' positionality in WWII?

Sanananda is a place important in the landscape of the war. It is one of the places frequently referenced as a landing site of the Japanese Army on mainland New Guinea, in the Territory of Papua, on 21 July 1942. In the military chronicles of the Kokoda Campaign, Sanananda is usually cited alongside the neighbouring villages of Buna and Gona. It is located halfway between these other two villages and has traditional ties with both. The colonial administration had established a government station at Buna in the early 1900s and Anglican missionaries had stations at both Buna and Gona.

In mid-November 1942 these villages were the sites of a fierce battle for the Northern Beaches. The events that took place at the beachheads are inextricably linked to my fieldsite because the war by many Oro accounts started there then ended there. From the shore, the war moved west and southwest through bush and river plains like Gorari and up into the mountains then back in the opposite direction roughly along the same route – from the sea through riverine terrain up into mountains and back down to sea. The movement of the war in what is now Oro Province alone covers a large area and followed the Buna-Kokoda Track, a vital link between Kokoda Station and its sub-station of Buna. The modern-day vehicular highway today still follows roughly the same route. While my ethnographic fieldwork has concentrated on a particular battlefield, my broader work with the PNG Museum has allowed me to draw from material from other locations affected by the war.

My fieldsite of Gorari and other parts of Oro Province affected by the war are also inextricably linked by another product of colonialism. To be more specific, the 'product' I refer

to, coined by William MacGregor in 1894 and which found currency in the writings of early ethnographers of the Northern District in Chinnery and Beaver (1916) and Williams (1930), is the ethnonym 'Orokaiva'. Their mapping of the area categorized as Orokaiva, with an imaginary line beginning just south of Buna (Williams 1930: 1), did not include the Northern Beachheads of the later WWII iconography (refer to map below). Williams debunks the universality of the term as a greeting and welcome salutation in the area described as Orokaiva though he acknowledges other similarities in nearby places which included the Binandere to the north and places as far south as Cape Nelson near the border of Milne Bay. Despite this he accepts the continued use of the term Orokaiva to describe the people (Williams 1930: 1-4).

The label has since found common usage in more recent times as a distinguishing character and defining personality of people in the present political domain of Oro Province. The popular use of the term Orokaiva creates the false perception of a single language and monoculture in the province. For the purposes of an ethnography of the war though, it is a convenient tool to speak of an Orokaivan experience and position during the global conflict. This is what Mongagi does when he purports to speak for the people of his province and the whole of PNG by extension when he asserts that his father and those of the wartime generation must be viewed as 'mit in a sanwitch'.

Figure 2. Overview of Oro Province, generally referred to as 'Orokaiva'. **Google Earth** image.

The people of Gona, Sanananda and Buna speak the Ewage dialect. According to the Orokaiva Ancestry Heritage Study led by Hiari, Ewage speakers are a part of the Songe Tribe which comprise more than 600 clans and sub-clans that cover more than 300 villages in the Kira,

Tamata, Higaturu, Kokoda and Oro Bay LLG areas (Hiari 2016: 1). Hiari refutes William's classification of tribes 'by environment' and instead bases his classifications by oral traditions relating to the migratory patterns of the clans. The Songe Tribe classification cover Gorari and Oivi too but most people I have interacted with in my fieldsite identify themselves as being part of the Kaina Tribe (refer to chap. 1). Colonial intrusion and missionization of the areas between Oro Bay and the hinterlands occurred within close succession of each other as the presence of the colonial administration enabled the establishing of the Anglican Church in the area.

One of the founding priests of the first Anglican Church at Dogura, Milne Bay, Reverend Albert Maclaren, took a temporary job as MacGregor's secretary with the expressed intention of scoping out a suitable place to establish a mission. Maclaren is said to have preferred Oro Bay but because of 'intense tribal fighting and killing further east', in Binandere tribal area, MacGregor persuaded the Anglican missionaries to choose another site (Titterington 1991: 8). One year later, in August 1891, Maclaren and Reverend Copland King arrived at Dogura. The founding of the Sangara Mission in Central Kaiva in 1921, allowed the work of the Anglican missionaries to spread further inland into Hunjara and Kaina areas. 'That was when the floodgates really opened, and great harvesting was limited only by the fewness of the labourers' (Hand 1991: 9). The Gona Mission Station was established seven years later. In 1942 Fr. James Benson was the priest at Gona.

According to Fr. Ted Kelly, the peoples' propensity for tribal skirmishes at Dogura was not dissimilar from Oro Bay, Binandere and the Orokaiva areas. He writes in stark militaristic terms that,

> Dogura used to be a fighting ground. Traditionally warring tribes from coast to mountain, armed with spears, bows and arrows, met on the 220 feet high plateau near the coast for battle followed by their customary atrocities. Since 1891 it has been the site of a battle of a different kind, for it was at nearby Kaieta that the pioneer missionaries landed and it is the site of the Mother Station of the Anglican Church of PNG, whose special pride is the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul (Kelly 1991: 1).

Nelson observes that the first patrols, in the late 1800s to early 1900s, to mark the track from Kokoda to Buna 'crossed country which was, in Monckton's colourful prose, the 'theatre of constant warfare and scenes of cannibalism' (1976: 143). Observations in missionary and archival reports often view Papua New Guinean sociality as nefarious and unchristian, creating a dichotomy of good versus bad or morality versus immorality between themselves and indigenous peoples. When the war arrived, this kind of messaging is refracted onto the Japanese 'invaders' as is clear in Mongagi's retelling of his father's story,

> This is how it started, but my father told me. He never told me the date, because he didn't go to school. He never told me the date, the time or the hour that the Japanese landed at Sanananda. Japanese landing here, according to him… was between half past three, four o'clock [when] the Japanese landed here. There was only one person whose name I'm proud to reveal here, from Buna and Sanananda, [and] was the only person who spoke English back in 1942. He was a mission boy, a student of Father [Benson's], and his name is Norman. His second name slipped my mind so I cannot remember at this stage

> but as we go on I might recall. This man was the only person in Buna Sanananda area that could speak English, a little bit of English, and he communicated with the Japanese officers. Anyway, that particular day he was with my father who happened to be his first cousin. They were along the beach trying to catch fish. They were fishing in fact and Father Benson actually told him that one day the bad people will come. He described the bad people as having slanted eyes, short, small build. So, if you see these people, they are bad people. And he said 'when you see them approaching your village, they will be coming in big ships, much, much bigger than big canoes that you have here'. So, when the two of them, my dad and his cousin, Norman, after fishing Norman climbed the coconut and looked out, and while dropping some nuts down, he looked out in the open sea and found out that the ocean was completely covered by the landing crafts. All the way from Buna straight to Gona. And they were approaching in advancing manner, straight, by the big troop carriers. And one of the troop carriers that was heading for government Buna mission was actually bombed there by the Allied Forces (Mongagi 2016).

Because of the missionaries and proponents like Norman, Mongagi senior and his people had been presented a certain perspective of the newcomers. The missionaries, despite their tense relationship with the colonial government, no doubt peddled similar narratives, and had clearly differentiated themselves from the Japanese by racial and moral terms. The people were told that the Japanese were bad, most likely non-Christians and heathens. Their physical and facial features were explicitly described so that the people could not mistake them for Australian if they were uncertain about their skin colour.

The influence of missionaries already in the area and other elements of the Australian colonial administration, like kiaps (patrol officers), meant that people were predisposed to show loyalty and support to the Allies. The Japanese, the other side or slice of bread in the proverbial sandwich, were thus by default seen by many people as 'bad people' and an invading force. This was one way in which the war was being presented to the people, that is, good versus bad, Australians against Japanese or Christians versus non-Christians. Mongagi continues with his father's story,

> So, when they landed, just when they were approaching closer to the beach, the two cousins, Norman and Ambrose, my dad, returned to the village, and brought the news saying 'the bad people have now arrived'. They asked them to look at the beach and when they turned around they saw all those ships approaching. Prior to that they were all sitting around happily, getting ready to eat a pork meat, a pig that was speared the night before and it was being cooked by the women folk, while the men folks sat down chatting away happily. When the news broke out from Norman, the mission boy, immediately there was two people, also again their names, what will I say their clan names, their names, no I cannot recall that. They immediately ran into their houses got the spears and their clubs and they wanted to retaliate, they wanted to fight against the Japanese with their spears and their clubs. While in the preparation the Japanese fired the first shell from the ship. That didn't get them. The second was fired and one fell down instantly and died. Unfortunately, the mission boy didn't have that time to tell them to move quickly. He was busy telling everybody when these two tried to challenge the Japanese with their

> spears and clubs. In doing so as a result of that, one died instantly. So, when he came, he told them, 'you better move, we cannot fight them'. So, they have to leave. But, the sad part was that, when they were leaving they didn't take their food, the pig that they expected to eat, the pork, everything was just left there, and they all ran into the bush. When this happened, they all moved up into the bush, at least seven plus kilometres that evening. Many villagers, including my dad's family, my grandfather, grandmother, all my uncles, they took what they could take in a very short time and they had to rush out. It was time of confusion and they really don't know what was really happening. But they only listened to this mission boy, who was actually telling them to move. So they went, as I said earlier, they went seven plus kilometres and they spent the first night at a place called Bago. And Bago is now the government school. This spot where it is now, they spent the night there. There was no shelter, nothing. That is the first struggle of the first week of that war that started here in Sanananda (Mongagi 2016).

I suggest that having men like Norman and Ambrose who had some social standing in their village refer to the Japanese as 'bad people' endorsed the perspective that the missionaries and proponents of the colonial administration were giving at the time. The arrival of the Japanese on the Northern Beaches in such an aggressive or violent manner further confirmed for people there that the Japanese were 'bad people' and that the Australians should be supported. The reaction of the two men, one of whom was killed by shell fire from a Japanese ship, to wield their weapons and make ready to fight the newcomers, shows the peoples' predisposition to oppose the Japanese especially since they were clearly the aggressors in the landing scenario as far as the people there were concerned.

When the Japanese landed at Sanananda, people were going about their normal daily lives. Ambrose explained to his son, Newman, that the Japanese landing took place sometime in the afternoon. People were preparing their evening meals or just getting back home from the days' activities. In the village some women were cooking a pig that the men had caught the night before. The men were engrossed in their own conversation while the kids were probably playing around. Ambrose and Norman had caught themselves some fish and were collecting coconuts for their dinner beverage. Like in many other places that the war passed through, the mundane lives of people, albeit as subjects of the colonial government, were shattered and often without warning. In a matter of hours Ambrose, Norman and their people went from preparing dinner to escaping more than seven kilometres on foot and sleeping somewhere else.

The Japanese taking over of Rabaul in January 1942, their landing on the Northern Beaches of the Papuan Territory in July and all relate' military engagements are described and labelled by Western historians as an 'invasion". It is referred to as such because after WWI the territories had been placed under an Australian colonial administration. However, the term invasion has certain political and legal meanings and implications that indigenous people at the time little understood. For them, the Japanese incursions were the latest in a series of invasions by foreigners, yet the WWII experience is markedly different.

Pacification, for instance, is remembered by some in Oro Province with ambivalence. While it was forced on people and caused bloodshed in many places, Bashkow (2006:58-9) notes '…there

are many indications that even at the time of pacification people were relieved to be free of the constant fear of raids and the pressure to battle, and that they were understandably glad of the peace, which allowed them greater freedom to travel'. After 1905 the new lieutenant-governor of the Territory of Papua, J.H.P Murray, even curtailed officers' use of violence and collective punishments and '…instead sought to extend the influence of the government through peaceful means' (PAR 1912-28, referenced in Bashkow 2006: 43).

Arthur Duna who witnessed the Japanese landing from his vantage point at nearby Buna gives this account,

> The firing of the guns and the explosions of bombs brought all the clouds of the skies down and touched the earth and all the living things seemed to be crushed to dust. All the clansmen who were brave, courageous, and strong in the previous day appeared to become like babies in their first day out of their mother's womb at the arrival of the Japanese. It was as if the landing, gun noises, and the actual terrifying sight of the ships that covered the wide horizon of the bay had removed the bones of the people. They could not run even if they tried to, for it was a unique disaster beyond anyone's memory (Waiko 1991).

Duna's story describes the Japanese landing at the Northern Beaches as earth-shattering, so much so that the people did not know how to respond to the display of technological power. Like those at neighbouring Sanananda, they realized very quickly that their traditional weapons were no match for the weapons that the invaders brought with them. Through pacification the colonial subjects had experience of similar powerful weapons being used by kiaps, planters, or traders but the war brought with it an excess and variety of weapons and technology previously unmatched. Many local accounts speak of the unprecedented nature of WWII which contrasts with observations in archival records of the frequency of violent tribal skirmishes as well as clashes between indigenous people and kiaps, gold prospectors, or missionaries. Williams notes that the Orokaiva term for raid or tribal expedition is *isoro* (1930: 160). The Binandere term *gitopo itoro* means the same but after a peculiar encounter in which Mambare and Gira warriors used rifles in a raid to loot Zia villages on the Waria River and slaughter people, a new term was given – *kiawa itoro* meaning 'a whiteman's war' (Nelson 1976: 108).

Nevertheless, the 'unprecedented' nature of war is an observable attribute. 'Every war', Fussell writes, 'is ironic because every war is worse than expected. Every war constitutes an irony of situation because its means are so melodramatically disproportionate to its presumed ends' (Fussell 1975: 7). Of the American Civil War, Faust writes that 'No one expected what the Civil War has become', and 'Neither side could have imagined the magnitude and length of the conflict that unfolded, nor the death tolls that proved its terrible costs' (2008: 3). She provides several factors that contributed to the unanticipated and unprecedented losses beginning with the 'sheer scale of the conflict itself'. The second factor was that,

> Changing military technology equipped these mass armies with new, longer-range weapons-muzzle-loading rifles-and provided some units, by the latter stages of the war,

> with dramatically increased firepower in the form of breech-loading and even repeating rifles (Faust 2008: 4).

The people of the Northern Beaches witnessed the use of weapons that were so powerful that the wielders could inflict pain or kill from a long range and could even remain unseen as they did. The powerful weapons on display presented terrifying new ways of killing and of dying. In Duna's descriptions, men and women were all rendered equal in their fear and feeling of helplessness. He states that the sight of the military might of the Japanese, the number of ships sailing into the bay, 'removed the bones of the people'. This metaphor has the same meaning as an English metaphor, 'to make weak in the knees', because of fear. This imbalance of power increased the peoples' feelings of helplessness and powerlessness which Duna's story reaffirms. The Japanese weapons were technologically more superior to their own and there seemed no way they could resist or retaliate. All they could do was run away and hide in the jungles. Fleeing from active fighting and taking refuge in the jungle, in caves, behind big boulders, on top of mountains or whatever natural feature was a common experience of many people during WWII.

Many people have told of the experience of running away 'into the bushes' when the fighting moved through their village or general area. Geso, a Pomio interlocutor of mine who features more prominently in Chapter 3, tells a story that follows this narrative. He is a *glasman* from the Sulka village of Milim in Wide Bay (refer to the map below). He is a short-statured man with a plump belly and not as much white hair and loose skin as someone his age might be expected to have. He says that 'skin blo mi tait yet (my skin is still tight)' because of the *papait* (Tok Pisin term for magic or magical power) that he uses which keeps his skin firm, his energy levels up and his demeanour youthful. He makes a special brew made with certain *diwai* (plants, trees, or grass) that he drinks to keep his youthful vigour. When I asked of his age he pointed to one of his grandsons and said, 'Mi olsem em lo taim blo wo. (I was like him during the wartime)'. The grandson did not know his age but I estimated him to be around 12 to 14 years old which would make Geso somewhere between 90 to 95 years old now.

Geso is the first direct witness of WWII that I spoke with. At first sight one might think Geso is a septuagenarian and his personality and sense of humour make him seem still younger. Our interview was long and lively and interspersed with regular jocular jousts with his kids and grandkids which he always hyphenated with certain favourite maledictory terms. He begins his wartime story with his experience of running away and hiding,

> Mipla ronawe go lo bush lo baksait. Bush ya na antap. Mipla sa ronawe mipla sa hait ananit lo ol kil blo ol diwai. Ol bikpla ol kil blo diwai, ol bikpla olsem. Na sapos yu abrusim kil blo diwai na yu sanap lo as blo diwai olsem ya em bai bom kilim yu ya. Na yu mas hait long kil blo diwai em bai bom i kam em bai pas lo hap ya oh, katres, bai nonap kilim yu.
>
> We ran away into the bush at the back. At the bush and further up (the mountains). When we run away, we hide underneath the big tree buttresses. The very big tree buttresses, big like this. And if you don't hide behind the tree buttresses and you just stand at the base of a tree like this (referring to a smaller tree), then the bomb will kill you. So, you must

> hide at the [big] tree buttresses that will shield you from the bomb or bullets, so they don't kill you.

The villages in Wide Bay occupy a relatively narrow area of flat coastal land before reaching the steep inclines of the Nakanai Ranges. In some places the mountains seem to rise straight out of the sea and it is common to find coral outcrops atop the first line of mountains. The bush and jungles have many large old trees with big buttresses and deep root systems especially along the slopes not used for gardening or firewood or on the ridge tops. These were good for taking shelter in and hiding from bombs and other projectiles. The trees with big buttresses that Geso refers to are the Kauri Pine (Agathis Robusta) commonly found in the Nakanai and Baining mountain ranges.

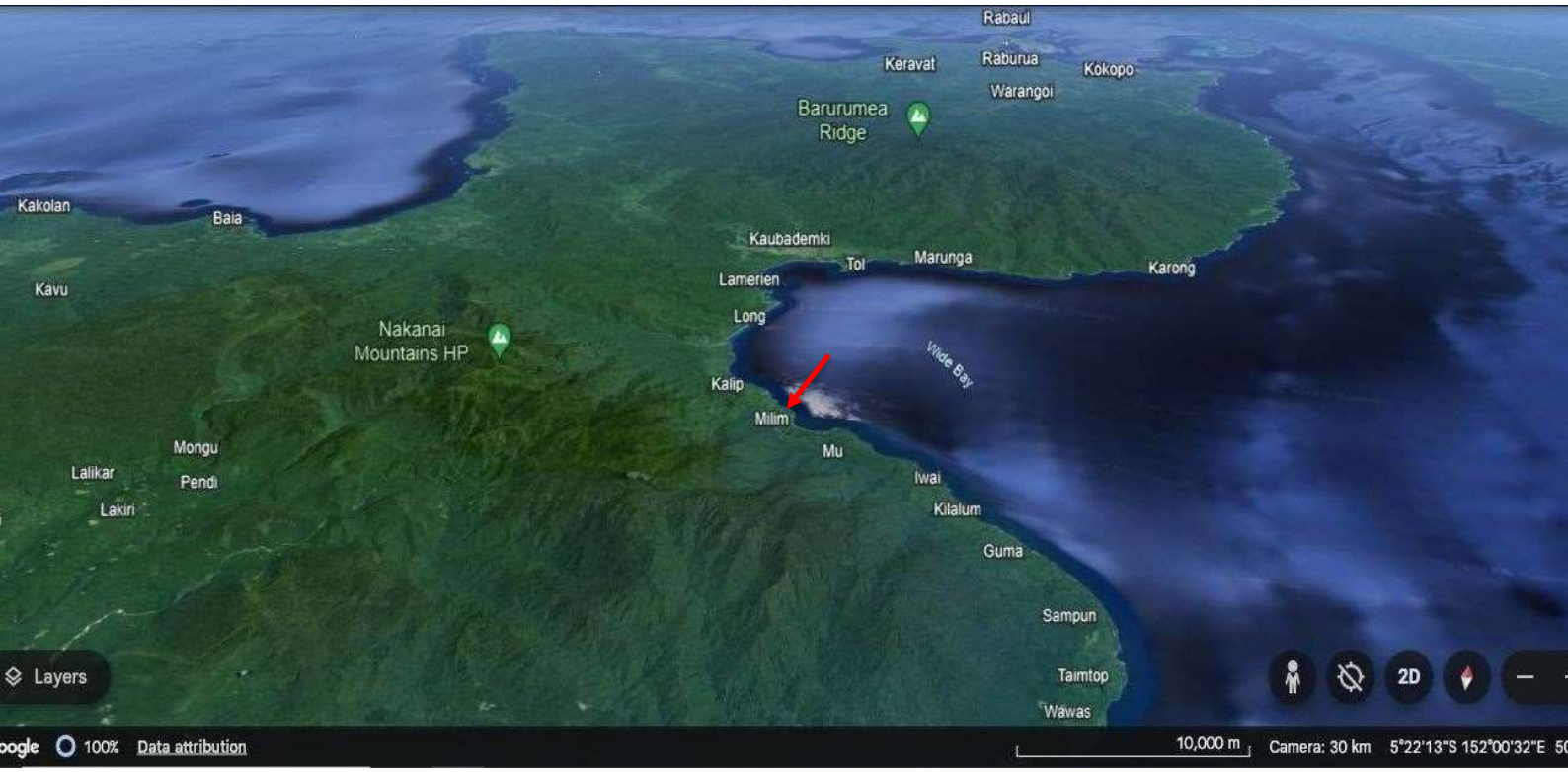


Figure 3. Overview of Wide Bay. Milim can be seen on the southwestern shores indicated by the red arrow. **Google Earth** image.

Geso and his people could not make fires to cook during the day as the smoke would give their positions away and attract the attention of both Allied and Japanese aircrafts who were on lookout for enemy ground troops. He says they only cooked at night which meant they did not have regular meals. He continues,

> Olsem na mipla sa ronawe mipla sa go hait gut. Na taim mipla sa lus lo kaikai long wonem ol Ostralia sa tromoi ol kaikai tu ya. Taim blo wo. Ol sa tromoi ol kaikai, na ol sa

> buruk nating. Mipla sa go mumutim ol bisket tasol. Bai ol lukim paia bai ol sutim yu ya. Ol sa ron tasol ol sa kisim bisket, tinpis, mit, blo opim na kaikai wantaim bisket ya. Bifo. i nogat malolo blo yu ya. Em nait, san, nait, san, em fait i on tasol olsem ya.
>
> That is why we ran away and concealed ourselves as best we could. And then we started running out of food and at some point the Australians started throwing food to us. During the war. They would throw food and many would just burst open. We would go and gather what we could, and mostly the biscuits. If they saw fire they would shoot you. Our people would run and just get the biscuits, tin fish and meat, for opening and eating with biscuits. This was way back. There was no rest for you. Night and day, night and day, the fighting just went on and on.

The Allied Forces used transport aircrafts to carry food and ammunition to soldiers in inaccessible areas and these were dropped over marked landing zones with parachutes. At some point they also started providing food for villagers in hiding or those in the refugee camps. Food supplies were distributed to most areas in PNG directly affected by the fighting. Geso's descriptions – of 'throwing food' and food 'breaking apart' when thrown – give some indication of the method used. The aircrafts were given the nickname of Biscuit Bombers or Kai Bombers – *kai* being the Tok Pisin word for food. Because they could not make fires, the easiest and safest meal for people, and soldiers alike, was to open a tinned fish or corned beef and slather that on the biscuits, making a sandwich of sorts – a biscuit sandwich. The biscuits were often broken so another popular 'dish' was to use the tinned meats as dip for the biscuit pieces. Soldiers in forward areas near enemy lines could not make fires to cook dehydrated food so likely ate like this too, along with whatever food they could scrounge. This type of food was termed unpalatable by army standards but quite normal food rations in colonial plantations.

The imagery of the 'mit in a sanwitch' metaphor suitably positions all the actors during WWII. Thinking about it more graphically, it positions the Allies on one side and the Japanese Army and its allies on the opposite side. The two sides are now enemies and are fighting for reasons unknown and unimportant to people who had no say in how the war began. These people have been described, by some at least, as the metaphorical meat in a sandwich not of their own making. This is what Mongagi means when he says, retrospectively, that 'it was none of our business' and 'not in our interest'. Later in his father's story it becomes clear that a binary script of the actors in the war had been presented to many people. We see from some of their reactions to the Japanese landing that they were predisposed to supporting the Australians. However, Mongagi's insistence is that since his people had no say in the reasons for the war from the outset they had already been positioned unfavourably as the metaphor suggests. They were dragged into the war because of their colonial subjectivity. That is, since Australia was at war, they, as a territory of Australia at the time, automatically became embroiled in the conflict though not of their own volition.

The 'mit in a sanwitch' metaphor that Mongagi uses to describe his people functions to show their positionality in relation to the other actors in the war. They are shown to be in a state of in-

betweeness and must react to the information being provided to them or react to the events happening around them in a way that would favour their survival. They have no say in or control over the events of the war as it happens around them but have been given a scripted view of the Japanese by the Australians, and latterly, a scripted view of the Australians by the Japanese. As the war goes on, the Japanese also began trying to influence people to support them either through physical threats or propaganda like magazines or leaflets. Like the biscuit sandwiches that displaced people had to live off, people had to make decisions in a crisis not of their own making.

According to Wolfers, 'For most Papua New Guineans who somehow became involved, the war was a matter of doing what they were told – as coastwatchers, soldiers, carriers and roadbuilders, for the Allies, or the Japanese' (1975: 110). He gives an example of a man from Yasa, Manam Island in Madang Province, whose protestation encapsulates the Papuan and New Guinean dilemma,

> You see, we do not understand. We are just in the middle [of nowhere]. First the Germans came – and the Australians pushed them out. Then the Japanese pushed out the Australians. Later, the Australians and the Americans forced the Japanese to go. It is beyond us. We can do nothing. When a kiap… tells us to carry his baggage we have to do it. When a German told us to carry his baggage we have to obey. When a Japanese told us to carry his baggage we had to do it. If we did not we might be killed. All right, there it is. Take it or leave it. *Nogat Tok*. I didn't say anything, that's just how it is, that's life (Burridge 1967, cited in Wolfers 1975: 110).

This man's story presupposes the state of in-betweeness that people found themselves in during colonization by different countries and through to the war period when acquiescence to one side or another was necessary to survival. He presents his statement matter-of-factly showing the pressure on people to choose a side from the limited options.

During the war both the Japanese and Australians are trying to influence people who must decide on a side or runaway into the bushes and hide. Running away and hiding maintains their in-betweeness and their neutrality as they are avoiding being in a position where they are forced to choose a side. Maintaining a state of in-betweeness had its advantages most obviously that people could remain neutral and look both ways. It meant people could possibly seek assistance from any side when needed. Choosing a side or even mistakenly being aligned to a side could get people in trouble with the enemy and this happened a lot. Many people found themselves somewhere in-between the binary structure of the war.

Ambrose and his people were predisposed to supporting the Australians and some try to retaliate against the Japanese during their landing at Sanananda while most run away. Most people in Duna's village at Buna are scared and run away or go into hiding as in Geso's village of Milim.

Taking a gendered approach to 'in-betweeness' I compare the political position of Papuans

and New Guineans during WWII to that of Hagen women as rendered through Strathern's ethnography in the 1960s. The woman's position is seen as an outcome of the way rights in her are distributed – between a husband, in-laws, parents, brothers – or of the balance of influences over her. The woman is 'interstitial' between groups, 'peripheral' in terms of the power structure (Strathern 1972: viii) as were Papuans and New Guineans during the war. As we will see in the next section, there can be overt gendering of roles assigned to men and local people in war as with carriers taking on the women's role in traditional fighting. Hagen women, Strathern posits, traditionally had little part to play in warfare, although their transference between clans sometimes signified friendly intentions; in the exchange system, however, their participation is more active. Women's dual and partial group affiliations put them in positive mediatory roles which made their alliances significant, and they are 'seen as having loyalties to distribute' (Strathern 1972: viii).

Running away into the bush, hiding out of fear, whether peoples' intentions were deliberate and political or for survival, were important moments of self-definition. To speak of a Papua New Guinean 'agency' as it relates to the act of 'going bush' or running away and hiding depicts a more common human response to war when one is not morally invested in it or not properly equipped to partake in it. Papuans and New Guineans during the war occupied interstitial spaces between groups but while Hagen women acted as links between different groups through their cross-affiliations, the 'mit in a sanwitch' narratives are about trying to make a neutral space where people could remain non-aligned, unallied and non-partisan.

The position of in-betweeness or 'hiding in the bush' is certainly not the whole story but provides a specific kind of perspective from an unseen vantage. It is a productive space to speak from and offers new voices and new stories that are not fully determined by the victors of war nor even by the losers of the war who might now claim victim status. The position of in-betweeness speaks from a space that is not fully defined by the bipolarity of WWII either. In the teaching and learning of the history of WWII, colonialism, missionization and pacification, these 'mit in the sanwitch' positionality and narratives offer new insights. What it certainly represents here are peoples' ongoing sense of disenfranchisement caused by the war and a feeling that restitution, whatever form that might take, is still owed them by the former combatant nations – both victors and losers.

Section 2 – The Carriers

> I hear a lot of you reporting on national radio about other people. News of other people. But you're not doing something on news about Oro people. I challenge you. If you cannot write my story than you cannot be my son!
>
> - Jude Siroro Kure Hiari, May 1972

Almost eighty years since the end of WWII, stories and memories of it persist and remain cogent and affective links between the wartime generation and succeeding generations who seek to make sense of it and find value in remembering. Whether he meant it or not, when Jude Hiari threatened disowning his son, Maclaren Hiari, if he did not record his story, it set his son on a path he still treads today. Maclaren has had a colourful career working as a journalist in various government departments including the National Broadcasting Corporation which is where his reporting of the stories of 'other people only' invoked the ire of his father. Maclaren's research interest in PNG's wartime history began with the above encounter with his father who served as a carrier, one of the so-called 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels', during the Kokoda Campaign. The younger Hiari recorded his father's story in five different sessions which generated more leads to follow. Jude gave his son the names of fellow carriers he served with, so his investigations snowballed from there with him picking up momentum with each interview. His research hobby would lead him to being recruited by the PNG Museum as Principal Curator of the Modern History Department where he worked between 1992 and 1994. Coincidentally, this is the position I currently hold. Stepping into both his role at the PNG Museum and doing similar work to his decades long personal project of recording wartime memories, I am in some sense carrying on his legacy and that of his father's.

In retirement Maclaren Hiari's researching and recording of oral histories of the war has not only continued but expanded in new ways like genealogies, clan boundary mappings and linguistic mapping. The amount of knowledge and information he has collected about Papua New Guineans during the war is substantial. When asked about his personal project in 2014 during the PNG Museum's Oral History Project, Hiari said he keeps a twenty-foot shipping container behind his house that serves as storage for all that he has collected. He calls this shipping container the Orokaiva Archives. In it are over three thousand Papua New Guinean accounts of WWII. 'I have three tin trunks, three suitcases, six cartons, twenty-five folders, and two filing cabinets', says Hiari, 'which portray stories of people from ten provinces of PNG including Oro' (Hiari 2014). I have had the privilege of browsing through this maze of documents in 2014. What he has essentially created is a historiography that can be used to bolster the academic pursuit of writing Papua New Guinean understanding into the history of the war. This in part represents the broader intentions of the Oral History Project which benefitted from Hiari's established networks in Oro and Central.

When I went to Oro Province in December 2020 to visit my intended fieldsite, the first thing I did was touch base with Hiari who is a longtime resident of Popondetta Town. I had not seen him since 2015 at the conclusion of the Oral History Project. Apart from interviewing him, I wanted to get some advice and direction regarding the condition of the Kokoda Highway, crime rates in the province and his insights into my fieldsite. He has interviewed hundreds of people of the wartime generation in Oro alone including Gorari. In my work with the PNG Museum, I have covered some of his old research areas as well as doing more battlefield archaeology around Oro.

Why is it that wartime stories continue to remain apposite, not just to individuals like Hiari who have personal connections to it through their fathers, but also to government departments like the PNG Museum whose working policies are influenced by their bilateral relations with

Australian counterpart departments like the Department of Environment and Energy (DEE) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Canberra? The figure of the carrier, or the more popularly contrived Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, is a central feature of how many individual Australians and the Australian Government remembers the Kokoda Campaign. The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel has so been the focus of much Australian glorification and admiration as to overshadow other ways in which Papuans and New Guineans had experienced or partook in the war. But how do the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels themselves, or how do their sons and daughters, and grandsons and granddaughters, remember the carriers' experience and what do these stories and memories mean to them today?

Jude Hiari was a carrier and was one of eighteen men recruited by ANGAU officer Claude Champion straight from their village of Sirota in the Central Kaiva area and assembled with others at Kokoda Station in June 1942. Maclaren Hiari recalls his father story,

> So my father and the other carriers were forced to follow the Australian soldiers along the Kokoda Trail to Isurava, Alola, Templeton's Crossing, and to Myola. But between that period, they have never experienced such a modern warfare. So at Isurava, they saw many Japanese being slaughtered by the Australians, and many Australians being killed by Japanese, and one account my old man said was that place became a fierce fighting battlefield, and the people killed there is like you were assembling the killed pigs in a traditional Orokaivan ceremony. So, you know, it's the war that they have never experienced, because traditional wars were fought with spears and clubs, stone axes, or bows and arrows. But this war was vicious and terrible and frightening, it razed the environment and people, chased people into hiding. But this environment on the Kokoda Trail is unforgettable, because the conditions, terrain, you know, it's muddy, and you are carrying cargo down from Alola to Kokoda, and then from Isurava you are evacuating the wounded, and evacuating the wounded was an experience they hadn't had before. So, you know, the agony and the pain they had while initially evacuating the wounded was a solemn… because they regarded the young Australians as their sons being killed, and those who were being carried or being cared with loving and tender care, and taken over to the top of the hill where the first carriers were coming with supplies, in exchange for the wounded to be carried to Sogeri, while my father's 'gang' would carry the supplies back to the battlefield. So that was one of the experiences he had on the Kokoda Trail campaign (Hiari 2014).

As a carrier, Jude Hiari was not directly involved in the fighting but from his vantage, moving wounded soldiers just behind the line of fire he gives vivid descriptions of the fighting and killing he witnessed.

In Maclaren Hiari's story of his father, he describes the 'baptism of fire' at Awala, the crossing of the Kumusi River, the brief standoff at Oivi and Gorari in late July 1942, then the retreat to Kokoda Station, Deniki and along to the first major battle at Isurava in August. From Isurava on the Biage, Northern District, side of the Owen Stanley Ranges all the way to Ioribaiwa on the Koiari, Central District, side of the mountain ranges, back again and to the Northern Beaches,

Jude Hiari's war story covers the length of the Kokoda Campaign in the Papuan Territory. The fighting is being done by soldiers of the 39th Battalion and Maroubra Force, comprising the PIB.

A far greater number of people were recruited by the Allied and Japanese armies as carriers and labourers than any other role. The Japanese are known to have brought around 2,000 men from the New Guinea Islands region, on ships from Rabaul, to work as carriers during the Kokoda Campaign (James 2009: 12). Hiari notes no less than 500 desertions from the Japanese lines in this time. While some 'go bush', others join the Australian lines working as carriers, medical orderlies, scouts and even soldiers in the PIB and later the New Guinea Infantry Battalion (NGIB). One such case of a New Guinean working as a carrier on the Japanese lines before escaping and soldiering in the Australian Army was the Manusian man, William Matpi who will feature in Section 3 on Soldiers. He would go on to become one of only three Papua New Guinean soldiers to be awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for military service.

Ivan Nitua's father was 19 years old when he was recruited as a carrier for the Australian Army. Nitua is from the Biage village of Isurava near where the eponymous battle took place between 26 and 31 of August 1942. Nitua served as a Councilor in the mid to late 90s and today works as a Ranger on the Kokoda Track. My colleagues and I interviewed him on 3 July 2014 near Kokoda Station where he now resides. Nitua explains that, along with his father, Gileni, several other men were also recruited as carriers from his village,

> My uncle was a porter, or he was a carrier, and then Kudi was a cartridge carrier, [carrying] bombs straight from Isurava to Eora Creek and back and forward. Kudi. Gumelo. Okay, Inove, he was a wireless man, wireless telephone, so he used to pull the line along the [Kokoda] track here. Moni was a carrier (Nitua 2014).

Prewar and postwar, carriers were necessary for any government patrol to move rations long distances. As Schieffelin and Crittenden (1991: 13) note, 'Patrols, consisting of one or two white officers, a number of armed Papuan police, and a **line of carriers**, walking from village to village along an established route, were the chief means by which the native peoples of Papua were governed between 1885 and early 1970s' (my own emphasis). During the war, the need for carriers became even more pressing. Nitua identifies at least six men from Isurava who served as carriers and at least four who served as policemen. Apart from carrying food rations and the sick and wounded soldiers, they also moved ammunitions and vital communication lines.

The 'human transport train' is how Maclaren Hiari describes the line of black human bodies that bookended the Australian Army as they fought along the Kokoda Track and elsewhere linking the frontlines to supply bases and medical stations. He estimates 6,471 carriers were from the Territory of Papua alone. This is mostly based on his oral histories and even if these are exaggerated numbers, the fact is that many more Papuans and New Guineans served as carriers then they did as soldiers or in any other role. The role and title of carrier post-factum has become a role encompassing a wider range of ways that people served or contributed during the war. This includes people who may not have formally enlisted or had assisted in places even after the war had moved on elsewhere. The term 'carrier' now is not one just defined by the job descriptions given by the armies that used them but is one that people themselves have defined or ascribed their own meanings to. This may account for Hiari's high estimates. The numbers of carriers that

served during the Kokoda Campaign as estimated by Hiari and where they came from are:

Koiari Area	197
Sogeri Plantations	758
Port Moresby Area	785
Hanuabada Villages	338
Mekeo Area	480
Doa-Kanosia Plantations	393
Gulf District	587
Western District	315
Northern District	896
Rigo Area	913
Hula Area	395
Abau-Kupiano Area	414

ANGAU records indicate that by the end of October 1942 there are 1,650 carriers working the Kokoda line of communications and some estimates indicate as many as 3,000 carriers in all worked the Kokoda Track (James 2009: 18). Considering a looser definition of what a carrier is, a wider area of service from the Morobe border to Sogeri, and including those that deserted the Japanese lines to join the Allies, Hiari's estimations are highly plausible.

The term Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels is an Australian stereotype that has come to overshadow even the roles of the indigenous soldiers who served in the PIB and NGIB. The Australian familiarity with and popularization of the figure of the carrier during the war is due in part to the fact that this was the most common role played by Papuans and New Guineans even before the war, in assisting kiaps, gold prospectors, planters, or missionaries. It thus represents a continuation of the former colonial status quo in subtle ways that are underwritten today by the sentimentalized diction of war memorialization and the development-driven jargon of diplomacy. Fussell for instance describes how what was essentially feudal language before the war became 'raised' or 'high' diction. We see this in the case of terms like 'friend' becoming 'comrade', 'friendship' becoming 'comradeship' or 'soldier' becoming 'warrior' (Fussell 2000: 21-2). In the PNG-Australia context some 'high' terms are 'mate' raised from 'friend' or 'sacrifice' from 'dying'. This kind of language then become cemented, quite literally, in memorial cairns, monuments, plaques, statues and in museum didactics.

The phrase Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel is similarly contrived language, which was first coined by a soldier, Bert Beros, who used it in a poem of the same name which was later published in

Australian newspapers during the war. Two months after the poem was published, George Silk, a photographer for the Australian Department of Information, captured what would become the iconic image of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel. The photograph depicts a blinded Australian Private, George Whittington, being led to a field hospital near Buna by carrier Raphael Oimbari. These two impressions – in poetic prose and photographic posture – of the Papuan carriers were strengthened by the attitudes and views of some Australian soldiers in war diaries, letters home and press reports, which led to the creation of the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel myth' in Rogerson's (2012: 2) phrasing.

Figure 4. Photograph taken by George Silk on 25 December 1942 depicting the carrier, Raphael Oimbari, escorting a wounded soldier, George Whittington, along the Buna Track. Photo reference: https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C33402. Colourization by Gideon Laho.

The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels by Bert Beros

Many a mother in Australia,
When the busy day is done,
Sends a prayer to the Almighty
For the keeping of her son,
Asking that an Angel guide him
And bring him safely back
Now we see those prayers are answered
On the Owen Stanley track,
For they haven't any halos,
Only holes slashed in the ears,
And with faces worked by tattoos,
With scratch pins in their hair,
Bringing back the wounded,
Just as steady as a hearse,
Using leaves to keep the rain off
And as gentle as a nurse.

Slow and careful in bad places,
On the awful mountain track,
And the look upon their faces,
Makes us think that Christ was black.
Not a move to hurt the carried,
As they treat him like a Saint,
It's a picture worth recording,
That an Artist's yet to paint.
Many a lad will see his Mother,
And the Husbands, Weans and Wives,
Just because the Fuzzy Wuzzy
Carried them to save their lives.

From mortar or machine gun fire,
Or a chance surprise attack,
To safety and the care of Doctors,
At the bottom of the track.
May the Mothers in Australia,
When they offer up a prayer,
Mention those impromptu Angels,
With the Fuzzy Wuzzy hair.

Beros suggests in the fourth line (stanza 1) of the poem that many Australian mothers owe a debt of gratitude to the carrier 'for the keeping of her son'. In the third stanza, Beros appeals to Australian mothers to 'Mention those impromptu Angels' (line 7), 'With the Fuzzy Wuzzy hair' (line 8), 'When they offer up a prayer' (line 6). The carrier acted in the role of a carer, someone who was 'as gentle as a nurse' (line 16, stanza 1) and 'Carried them to save their lives' (line 12, stanza 2) as a mother, or father, might a child. The carrier acted in a non-combatant role which was probably a peculiar position for Kaiva men who, in an *isoro* were usually on the frontline. In the *kiawa itoro* that was WWII though, men who took on the roles of carriers witnessed the

fighting from behind the frontlines as would be the traditional vantage of their women. In traditional warfare, it was customary for women to accompany an attacking force of men '… carrying pots of food; and they might even stand by their husbands as armour bearers' (Williams: 1930: 164). Describing the role of women in warfare, Williams notes that women acted in supporting roles during warfare by supplying new spears, carrying shields or supplying food. Only occasionally would women assist the men in fighting (Williams 1930: 164). These observations about Orokaiva warfare are true of Sirota and for Gorari.

Here the carriers take on a kind of parental role in relation to the soldiers. Many carriers were older than the Australian soldiers they were tending too. Jude Hiari explained to his son, Maclaren, that they looked on the young wounded Australian soldiers as sons and tended to them with paternal care. Maclaren recounts his father's sentiments,

> So, you know, [despite] the agony and the pain they had while initially evacuating the wounded [they did it with much care] because they regarded the young Australians as their sons being killed. [My father's group carried the wounded] with loving and tender care over the hilltop where the [next group of] carriers were coming with supplies [where they] exchanged for the wounded to be carried to Sogeri, while my father's [group] would carry the supplies back to the battlefield. So that was one of the experiences he had on the Kokoda [Track].

The carrier becomes like father to the Australian soldier during the war. Taking a gendered perspective, this somewhat flips the former colonial status quo of Australia's paternalistic oversight of the two territories in which full grown men might be referred to as *boi* (Tok Pisin for boy) and the *waitman* (Tok Pisin for white man or white people in general) was referred to as *masta* (Tok Pisin for master).

The Oral History Project recorded other ways in which the sons, and daughters, of carriers interpreted the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel moniker that their carrier fathers had become known by. Inoa Bobogi Ovia, the daughter of a Koiari carrier by the name of Oga Bobogi, gave this interpretation that 'fuzzy wuzzy' means, 'Friend, I'll take you and I'll walk [with] you is what my father used to tell me. I remember that' (Ovia, 2014). Another Koiari informant of mine gives a similar interpretation that,

> The term 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel' is not an Australian term. It is actually a Koiari term. We called it 'fasi wasi'. *Fasi* means friend and *wasi* means feet, so *fasi wasi* means friend who walks with me.

This Koiari reframing subverts the racial undertones of the 'fuzzy wuzzy' descriptor of the natives' hair and reorients the relationship to one of mutual respect in the present. It perhaps suggests how successive postwar generations have continually looked to the Australian, and now PNG governments, for greater recognition of their father's wartime efforts.

A similar interpretation of the phrase 'fuzzy wuzzy' comes from Philemon Barminas Ogomei from Beama Village in Oro Bay. His father was Private Paminas Sena Ogomei who enlisted in the PIB in 1944 at the age of 21 but who initially joined the Allied Forces working as a carrier between 1942 and 1943. Philemon retells his father's story,

> They worked as carrier[s] between Duropa, Siremi and Doboduru – like a centipede, or *wowuji* in our local language. In our local language – because every day, seven days a week, they work[ed] from point A to point B – my father told me that they called themselves *wowujis* because of the Buna battlefield. Although the Japanese were dropping bombs on the battlefield, my father and all the *wowujis* carried food supplies, medical supplies, ammunition and other weapons, ordnances, equipment for roads and bridges and other items. My father and his friends also helped to build staging camps, hospital camps, labour camps, food depots, other depots, health facilities, laundries, water supplies, signal camps, power supplies, mess and kitchen facilities and other accommodation buildings with kunai grass and tents. My father and his friends helped [the] American [Army] to build many roads and bridges, shifting cargoes in and around Doboduru area (Ogomei 2014).

Private Ogomei had enumerated to his son the multitude of tasks that he and his colleagues had carried out, apart from moving sick and wounded. *Wowuji*, centipede or 'hundred legs' as the insect is often referred to in Tok Pisin, is how the carriers, in Orokaiva at least, referred to themselves. It recalls the image of the locomotive or the 'human transport train' in Maclaren Hiari's words. Here what the younger Ogomei and Hiari are essentially doing are taking the mass of working carriers and metaphorically framing them as one body. Even though all the carriers were not from one clan, let alone language group, they frame themselves as one. And their premiss for doing so is that they are set to the same task, coalescing together into one body to achieve it.

The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel phrase is a metonym, used not only as a synonym for the Papuan carrier during the Kokoda Campaign, but as a representation in many cases of the perceived Papuan and New Guinean support and loyalty to the Australians during the war. It is also a synecdoche that refers to the carriers by their fuzzy hair. This kind of descriptive terminology was a racial characteristic that presented the carriers, in the colonial period and during the war, as having different bodies from them and exist in a lower rung of the colonial racial hierarchy.

The Oral History Project and my current exposé seeks partly to understand the diversity of experiences of Papuans and New Guineans during the war and to unsettle such colonial tropes. There was a deliberate intent by researchers for instance to gain insight into the story of the famous photograph of Oimbari leading a wounded Whittington along the Buna Track. The image, which represents only a 'part' of the story, had instead come to represent the 'whole' story.

In Wagner's words, 'Any form of representation that can be conceived of mentally or projected physically for what an absolute *identity* of part and whole might be or mean results in a perfect scale model of the mistakes made in trying to represent that identity' (2001: 18). Understanding the mismatch of scale – how the trope promoted at the national and bilateral levels have come to overshadow local experiences – is important.

My colleagues and I spent the better part of a day (20 May 2014) interviewing Oimbari's grandson as well as the sons and grandsons of other carriers who had been involved in retrieving

Whittington from the battlefield and moving him to the nearby field dressing station. A total of twelve men – sons and grandsons – representing five other carriers who were working with Oimbari on 25 December 1942 when his photograph was taken with Whittington, were interviewed. Much was said of Oimbari's neat clean presentation in the Silk photograph insinuating that he had not been escorting Whittington for long before he was 'lucky' to become immortalized by the photograph. There was some resentment by the other carriers, now represented by their sons and grandsons, who think they may be missing out on some form of recognition, or even payments, from the Australian Government. The descendants of the other carriers were mad because they want the 'name' and 'fame' that comes with being in the photograph and its perceived benefits. They stood together as one body, as the *wowuji*, but only Oimbari got to momentarily stand out. However, Oimbari indeed loses much of his own identity and becomes a nameless figure who embodies the visual rendering of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel trope.

When the phrase Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel is mentioned to anyone who has some familiarity with the subject of the war in the Pacific, it often conjures in the hearers' mind the image of the Silk photograph. Some who are more familiar with the history of the Kokoda Campaign might even feel the tune of the Beros poem on the tip of their tongue at the mention of the angelic moniker. Rogerson argues that the trope has come to wholly represent a myth of the Papuan carrier who was 'willing, loyal, cheerful, devoted' and gave 'voluntary service' (2012: 11). According to Grant (2010: 150, referenced in Rogerson 2012: 6), the trope 'overshadows the insidious face of colonialism also evident within the New Guinea campaign.' The myth and subsequent portrayal of the Papuan carriers by Australians has, according to L. Reed (1999: 161, referenced in Rogerson 2012), placed them within a colonialist construct. The irony of the idea of a trope is that it becomes a self-referential whole and belies an elicitation of its parts (Wagner 1986: ix- xii; & Wagner 2001: 18-2). What the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels trope ignores and conceals is the violent history of colonial conquest and the often coercive and violent recruitment strategies during the war. It also silences the voices of the other parts of the *wowuji*.

Section 3 – Soldiers

> My father is Osborne Tomu and he was a PIB soldier. He was at Hanau Village when recruited as a soldier and taken to Sanananda Village where he went to war. When he went to war he saw the way the Americans and Australians [were] fighting the Japanese and he said, 'This is not right, you're all going to die if you continue this way. I will now give you instructions. Don't fight face to face, encircle or go round the back', and he found many of the enemies eating lunch, and that's when the Australians surprised them and killed them. It was lunchtime when my father finished them off [laughter].
>
> - Lomas Tomu Ani, Hanau Village, 2014

> Pulsar, Sanabise na Paranis, em olgeta save wokim blek blo ol, ino wanpla man tasol, em olgeta save makim. Yu save, fait ya na olgeta ya ol mas usim ol disla blek lo protektim ol na lo pasim ai blong ol birua.
>
> Pulsar, Sanabise and Paranis, they all used their *black* (magic), not just one man only, they all did this. You know, its war so they must all use their *black* (magic) to protect themselves and to blind the eyes of their enemies.
>
> \- Joseph Sananpike, Tol Station, 2021

In *Dark Trophies*, Harrison (2012: 8) discusses metaphors of social practice and argues that 'representations of war as a hunt are a widespread social practice metaphor in which cultural models connected with the hunting of animals are projected or transferred into the context of warfare and shape behaviour there'. A dichotomy, he posits, emerged in early modern Europe between civilized war, which aspired to be both rationale and humane, and primitive war, which was characterized by dark, irrational practices such as cannibalism and headhunting (Harrison: 2012: 8). Australian and American soldiers, who categorized theirs as modern warfare saw this as a justification for excessive counter-violence against enemy soldiers, especially the Japanese whom they saw as 'subhuman' and 'distant enemies' as opposed to Germans or Italians who were seen as 'near enemies' because of their racial similarities to Allied soldiers (Harrison 2012: 130-1). A dichotomy of civilized war and primitive war had arguably also been created and made apparent to indigenous peoples of the territories with the intrusion of the *waitman* and use of superior weapons and technologies. It had been enforced with the punitive expeditions carried out by colonial patrols or gold prospectors and the more violent methods of pacification. It is clear in the marked shift in use of more powerful weapons in the *kiawa itoro* as opposed to the *gitopo itoro* (refer to the Mit in a Sanwitch section).

Papuans and New Guineans who joined a side as soldiers during WWII had set themselves apart from their indigenous contemporaries in 1942. They had factored themselves into this schema of warfare at an equal level with colonial soldiers. Despite the hierarchical structure of armies and their systems of awarding heroism and bravery, by taking up arms these indigenous men had put themselves in the same positions as foreign soldiers to fight, maim, kill, or die. That is, they had projected themselves as equals in the context of fighting and war. Masculinities in the schema of warfare were thus rendered equal, however, the administrative arrangements of armies relating to pay, compensation, dress, or recognition did not always reflect this perceived equality. In fact, what many of my interlocutors, through my own fieldwork and involvement in the Oral History Project have highlighted, is a feeling that indigenous soldiers were more skilled fighters and killers than the *waitman* they served or fought alongside. Their responses in relation to the indigenous soldier's skills and techniques of killing suggest not only equality but even superiority. I demonstrate this in the stories of the following two individuals, as told by their grandsons.

Lomas Tomu Ani and Joseph Sananpike are both grandsons of prestigious Papuan and New Guinean war veterans. Ani is from Hanau Village, where Oimbari was from and by kinship

relations would refer to Oimbari as a grandfather. In our interview with him at Hanau he recounts Oimbari's story in the first-person voice, using the inclusive 'we' to demonstrate how his ancestors' acts during the war are also theirs today and so as their descendants they too must be recognized. That day in Hanau Oimbari had many grandsons who also iterated parts of his story they felt obliged to tell or related to in some way. Only later does Ani recount the story of his father, Osborne Tomu, who served as a PIB soldier.

Sananpike is a descendent of Sergeant-Major Paranis Kawatpur, a decorated soldier and scout in the Allied Intelligence Bureau. Kawatpur was from the Sulka village of Lamarieng in the inner reaches of Wide Bay, where Sananpike today serves as the local Ward Member.

Figure 5. Sananpike proudly displaying his ancestor's war medals at Tol Station. Ani says his father, Tomu, also received medals but that one of his brothers had lost them so he could not display them for us during our 2014 interview.

What Tomu and Kawatpur had in common were their superior fighting skills and techniques in warfare. In this schema of warfare where men were rendered equal, the skill of a warrior, by many local accounts did not rest entirely on their ability to wield the *waitmans'* weapons which was arguably an easier way to fight. Instead, the stealth, nerve, and ability to use *papait* to surprise and kill the enemy soldier or render their weapons useless against you was the measure of a warrior. This form of fighting and killing seemingly reverts to the mode of primitive warfare but what the responses of many people suggests is that within the schema of so-called civilized war, the proficiency in killing using traditional forms of fighting and appropriate technology were in some cases more effective and even superior to the *waitmans'* ways. If technology can be considered the application of a 'special' kind of knowledge for practical purposes, then these are

the types of methods that many people say their ancestors during WWII used to assist the foreign armies. Many soldiers, carriers, scouts, policemen, and villagers 'going bush' were known to have used this 'special' knowledge, often in the form of *papait*, to defend themselves, kill their enemies and even win the war.

Thus, Ani recounts with a smirk how his father led a group of Australian soldiers 'around the back' and caught Japanese soldiers off-guard, while they were eating lunch, and killed them. This was no doubt a technique of the traditional raid – *isoro* or *gitopo itoro*. Many accounts of indigenous soldiers follow this similar trend of catching the enemy off-guard while they are eating or sleeping. Sananpike tells a similar story of Kawatpur and his colleagues using their *papait* to go unseen into a Japanese-dug tunnel in Tol and kill all the Japanese soldiers that were asleep inside. The tunnel was one-way in and one-way out, but the men walked in undetected and killed the sleeping soldiers and helped themselves to their food, taking their time to enjoy and digest it before walking back out nonchalantly. This story about Kawatpur and his comrades and their exploits during the war is well-known in the Wide Bay area and has various iterations of it but every time I have heard it there is always an air of humour, amusement, and pride at how powerful Kawatpur and other Sulka men who served as soldiers were. Ani's story of his father, Tomu, ends with a scene of champion warfare where Tomu is chosen to fight on behalf of the Allies against a Japanese soldier. His story follows that,

> At the end of the war the Australian or American commander told Osborne Tomu that the next fight would be in an organized duel. The Japanese chose their soldier and the Australians and Americans chose his father to fight. He fought the Japanese in the duel with bayonets – the Australians and Osborne Tomu against the Japanese, with bayonets and it was my father who bayoneted the Japanese… After my father killed the Japanese the war came to an end and then they sent my father home (Ani 2014).

What Ani's story, however accurate it might or might not be, represents is the widespread belief by many people that they, or their ancestors, had played crucial roles in the Allied victory over the Japanese. Here the indigenous soldiers are being recast not as *mit in a sanwitch* but equal or lead warriors in the fighting of WWII.

Firth et al. (1997: 302) describes how the war had destabilized the former colonial status quo,

> And the war changed the soldiers' view of themselves: they were not ignorant Kanakas who could be ordered about, but had proved themselves the equals of white men. They deserved respect.

These sentiments resulted in more mutinous actions by Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) soldiers towards the end of the war. For instance, an Army report into an incident that happened in February 1945,

> … concluded that the soldiers took exception to the differences between their treatment and that of Australians. The commander of the 1st Army in New Guinea signalled that the soldiers of the Pacific Islands Regiment 'are *natural experts in jungle warfare and few Australians ever reach their individual standards* (emphasis added) (Firth et al. 1997:

302).

Indeed, Australian and Japanese soldiers have both commented on the fighting prowess of native soldiers. For instance, Australian military records credit Sergeant Matpi alone with killing 116 Japanese soldiers.

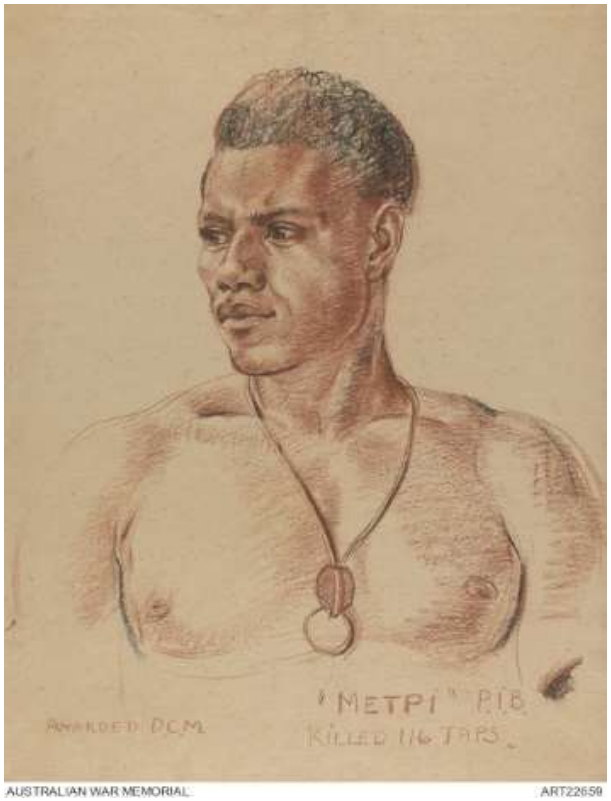


Figure 6. Sketch of Sergeant William Matpi. (Photograph reference: https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C171244).

There is also evidence that Papuan soldiers were feared and respected by Japanese soldiers one of whom described in his diary the Papuan soldiers as *ryokuin* which can be roughly translated to English as Green Shadows (Byrnes 1989: 1). Ako (2012: 81) explains the reputation of the Green Shadows that followed the indigenous soldiers of the PIB,

> Matpi became very notorious for his "killing sprees" and unorthodox ways of waging war during patrols. It is to the prowess of PIB heroes such as Matpi and Katue and the others, that the enemy nicknamed the PIB, the 'Green Shadows'. Katue, for one, showed an ability to penetrate to the rear of the enemy lines on numerous occasions and come back with information. On several such occasions, Katue had suddenly appeared in the midst of the dining enemy soldiers and started hacking them with his machete.

William Dargie who made the below portrait of Sergeant Katue notes that 'On his shoulders and arms Katue is wearing the badges of rank of 4 of the 26 Japs he stated he killed on his last patrol'

(AWM 2023, https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C169320).

Figure 7. Sketch reference: https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C169320.

In *Hold the Good Name of the Soldier: The Discipline of Papuan and New Guinea Infantry Battalions*, Nelson (1980), documents the recorded incidents of PIR soldiers expressing their grievances and dissatisfaction over unequal treatment by the Australian Army. Matpi led one such incident at the Bisatabu Forward Base in Koiari area near Sogeri and when warned that he could face serious charges he,

> … shouted that if the masters wanted to start shooting he was happy to let them. Given the chance to speak Matpi asserted that he had been a good soldier, and should have a proper uniform like the Australians and Americans with whom he had fought side by side (Nelson 1980: 212).

Nelson notes another incident in Wide Bay where 'troops returned their arms and equipment to the Q store before walking out…' (1980: 213).

The belief that Papuan and New Guinean soldiers were equal, if not better fighters and killers than the white soldiers is common. During the war these grievances were expressed by soldiers themselves during the types of incidents of indignation or insubordination as detailed by historians like Firth and Nelson. But when soldiers began being discharged by the Australian Army after September of 1945, many found it hard to assimilate back into the village or civilian settings again. Ako notes the laments of one of Moide's PIB comrades,

> We have helped the taubadas fight their bloody war. At the war's end, they just packed up and left leaving us with nothing but a few shillings for our blood, sweat and tears. How am I supposed to go back into the village and lay claim to my birthright? Our absence

> from the village ensured that whatever birthright we might have had before the war were given to our younger brethrens by the old ones (2012: 212).

Although, it should be noted that in other instances the returning soldiers and their part in the *taubadas* war had helped their reputation and social standing back in their villages or wider area. This was certainly the case for Kawatpur whom after the war was promoted from his former position as Luluai to Waitpus (Paramount Luluai). Many years after the war he continued to be an important point of contact in all of Wide Bay for kiaps and the colonial administration and still had a lot of power and influence even when he no longer held any formal position within the colonial administration.

Today it is the sons and grandsons of these soldiers or warriors who fought in the war who continue to assert the equality and superiority of their forefathers in fighting and killing. Rolf Asi, whose father, Asi Fere was a PIB soldier, was influenced by his father's stories of his WWII experiences to join the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF). Asi contrasts the difference in how he dressed as a PNGDF soldier as opposed to his father as a PIB soldier during WWII,

> I was in the army [and] I know what [type of] dressing that was needed to be in the battle but he was not dressed that way, he had only a calico with the weapons on and a pack at the back. But he said that was good because, you know, they moved faster, he said they crawled in, they crawled out, and they could smell the Japanese, they knew where they [were], they could even smell their brew, their coffee, or even repellent, their insect repellent or whatever they applied, they would smell them, and they would warn the Australians that these guys were close. So, I am pleased (Asi 2014).

Despite the PIBs initial lack of proper military dress, they still used it to their advantage as described by Asi. Robert Michael Banaga is the grandson of the PIB soldier, Augustine Angaro Simbiri, who was involved in the 'baptism of fire' on 23 July 1942 at Awala. He also speaks of the indigenous soldier's superior skills in jungle warfare. Similarly, Ako depicts how it was Moide and other Papuan soldiers who fired the first shots at Awala (2012: 108). Hiari, who had interviewed Moide in the early 1990s as well as documenting other firsthand accounts from PIB soldiers, corroborates that Papuan soldiers fired the firsts shots at Awala and claimed the first forty-three Japanese kills there.

Section 4 – Alleged Collaborators

This section aims to show the complexity and subjectivity of the notion of loyalty especially since it was not preordained onto either side. Were it so there would not have been much use to advise Allied Force soldiers how to secure native support as 'Our Potential Allies

(MacArthur 1943: 1). There would also have been no need for the Japanese Army to convince people of the merits of *nanshin-ron*, the political doctrine of the Japanese Empire.

Here I look at a group of people that do not fit properly into the categories dealt with in the previous three sections. These alleged collaborators received harsh punishments or sentences or were executed by either the Japanese or Australian armies for perceived acts of treason. Spilt loyalties in many cases reflected existing divisions or tensions in the village. These tensions were often over leadership between competing bigman or as in many cases were over clan or tribal boundary disputes. Often loyalty was not an immutable concept and was determined only by peoples' circumstances and will to survive.

People were put in positions whereby aligning their interests with whichever soldiers or army active in their immediate vicinity was conducive to their survival. These types of alignments were sometimes temporary and may have only served the purpose of survival. What the stories here show is that loyalty, and the giving of it, was multidirectional and not determined by the same kind of nationalist sentiments or ideological pretences that led to the war itself. Rather, loyalty from colonial subjects was malleable and situational dependent influenced by things like survival, friendship, interpretation of propaganda or perceived intrusions.

In the complex of international affairs in 1942 in which nations made war with each other, Papua and New Guinea were structurally not able to warmonger on the same level. The belligerents of WWII can be represented on diametrically opposed moral and political terms. Where their interests aligned, nations formed alliances. The determination of allies and enemies had been prefigured by the time war arrived in the territories. What to do with a large population of colonial subjects whose support, rather than opposition or indifference, was necessary to winning the war was a question that armies had different ways of addressing.

Allied Force soldiers were provided a pamphlet titled *You and the Native: Notes for the Guidance of Members of the Forces in their Relations with New Guinea Natives*. Page one of this pamphlet describes natives as 'potential allies' and goes on to describe how to secure and maintain their goodwill and support. The small booklet recommends for instance that in their dealings with natives, soldiers maintain their superiority and the former colonial status quo as a way of later securing their obedience (MacArthur 1943: 1-17). All wartime propaganda was geared towards soliciting the support of native populations or at least discouraging them from supporting the foes. The Allied advantage was the familiarity of Australia's colonial relationship with the people which they banked on in many cases.

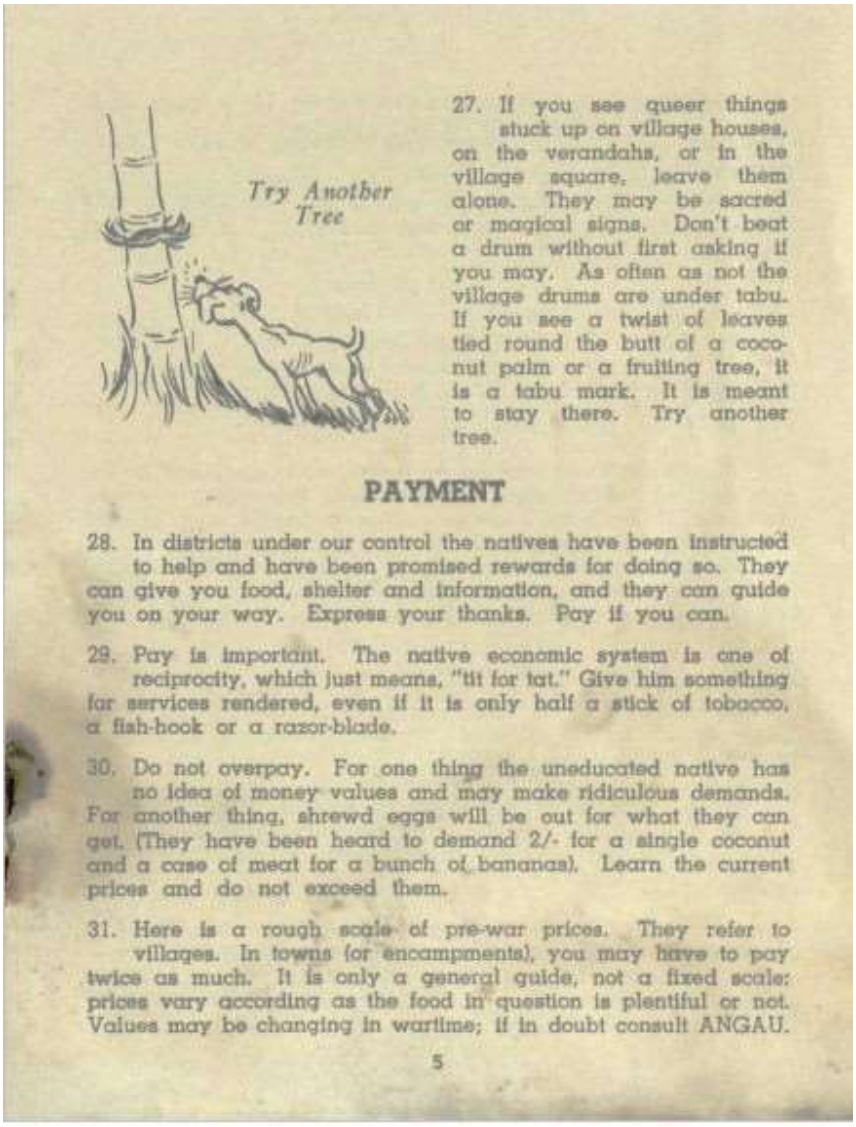


Figure 8. Page 5 of You and the Native is from a section on how Allied soldiers should conduct themselves in native villages. Point 29 warns not to overpay the 'uneducated native' who 'has no idea of money values and may make ridiculous demands.'

Japanese propaganda was based on *nanshin-ron* or the Southern Expansion Doctrine which reinforced the justification of southward invasion (Iwamoto 1997: 305). Advocates highlighted for instance historical linkages through Japanese who had settled in Papua or New Guinea before the war. The Asahi Newspaper in 1943 ran a whole chapter on 'mixed race boys' and how they were actively supporting the Japanese war effort in Papua and New Guinea. Iwamoto explains that New Guineans were also used as propaganda. The writers emphasized that New Guineans were grateful for the Japanese who liberated them from Anglo-Saxon rule (Iwamoto 1997: 306). On the battlefronts, propaganda proposing liberation from colonial servitude as well as harsh punishment for those who resisted was airdropped or passed out to villages by soldiers. Many

oral accounts and military records attest to the brutal methods Japanese soldiers also employed to force compliance by people. Thus, in the well-known case of a Solomon Islander, George Bogese, who was out on trial by the returning colonial administration in October 1945 for treason, the Anglican Bishop wrote on his behalf stating,

> I have no doubt that Bogese will plead that he acted “under constraint.” If he so pleaded and I were an Assessor on the Bench ... he would get my vote for "acquittal." There were absolutely blood-curdling stories going the rounds in the Solomons in the first half of '42 as to what the Japanese had done on Bougainville to extract information. If Bogese had heard these stories ... I am not surprised if he gave such information as was asked (Laracy 2013: 238).

Of the five charges that were brought against Bogose, he was acquitted of four. It was the fifth that he was found guilty of, ‘that he did, with intent to assist the enemy, voluntarily join himself with the enemy Japanese between 1 May and 8 August 1942’ (Laracy 2013: 238).

The figuring of friends and foes, allies or enemies, sympathizers or opposers was a process that was arguably being made constantly throughout the war. Apart from the bounds of loyalty or support in the representation of carriers and soldiers working for either side, people were regularly having to decide whom to support. A defection from one side to another or running away to ‘go bush’ represented a realigning of interests, often one based on self-preservation and survival. Newton thus notes that, ‘Typically, like most human beings, Orokaivans assessed the situation and negotiated the safest strategy for the survival of themselves and their families’ (1996: 141-156).

The loyalty of native peoples or colonial subjects acting outside the prerogative of a nation-state should not be held to the same standards as citizens. By putting on trial for treason those they did, the colonial administration placed them on an equal level as their own citizens, contrary to the Papuan’s and New Guinean’s more ambiguous legal statuses prewar. Caught in between the opposing narratives, individual positions could only be determined in relation to that of the major antagonists. The best way to keep safe from harm or reprisals was to remain hidden ‘in the bush’, a deliberate act by people to create safe and neutral spaces for themselves during the war. Being seen always had the risk of having your actions misconstrued or misrepresented even if people acted according to their own cultural norms. Visibility always posed a risk because armies had violent and deadly ways of negating the potential of people supporting their enemies.

Sananpike of Lamarieng recounts that not everyone in Wide Bay area were ‘on the side’ of the Australians,

> Ol i pait na bihain ol i, taim ol i stap long hap ol i wok long pait wantaim ol Japanis, long wonem ol Japanis i base long hia. So ol i pait tasol igo na igat sampla man lo ples tu ol i, ol i, ol i wok long pas wantaim ol Japanis na ol i wok lo kotim ol lain ol i joinim Ostralia.

> Sampla man lo ples, so ol i kotim tupla, tupla narapla bigman. Name blo tupla em Pavo, wanpla em Pavo na narapla, Kole. Em nau ol i kisim tupla i kam na ol i katim tupla lo hia. Ol i katim, rausim ol nek blo ol lo hia, lo Masarau.
>
> As the fight wore on, Australians fighting against the Japanese who were based here (in Tol while the Australians were at the Lamarieng side of Homhovulu). As the fighting progressed there were some people in the villages who were close to the Japanese and they were reporting those who joined the Australians. These village people reported two bigman. Their names were Pavo and the other is Kole. So then these two were brought and they were cut. They had their necks cut off here at Masarau.

Pavo was a Luluai and Kole was a Tultul who were betrayed by fellow villagers from Lamarieng who provided information to the Japanese. They were later executed at the Masarau prison camp which was established by the Japanese in early February of 1942. Meyela was another bigman from Bain, further south of Wide Bay, known to have been executed by the Japanese. While the full details surrounding the betrayal of these three men is not available, there are two most likely scenarios. One is that these men were betrayed by existing enemies from other clans or tribes – like the Baining or Mengen. This is highly likely as before WWII there were frequent tribal conflicts between the Baining and Sulka who share common borders. This ancient dispute continues today in a long-running court case and land mediation matter between the two tribes. The other likely explanation for the betrayal was that the people who gave the Japanese information had done so under constraint.

Located on the western shores of Tol Station, the Masarau makeshift prison camp was established in early February 1942 to keep Australian soldiers of the 2/22 Lark Force Battalion. After all the captured Australian soldiers were massacred on 04 February 1942, many locals were imprisoned there instead. The oral histories I conducted indicate that of the people imprisoned at Masarau, an uncertain number of both Baining and Sulka people were executed by the Japanese.

One of my principal Baining interlocutors, Franciscus Setavo, tells me more about those he knows were imprisoned there. A typical Baining man, he is timid but aggressively guards his Baining heritage and identity especially with regards to land matters.

Setavo tells me the story of his uncle, Joseph Lēmuthēmga (pronounced Le-mu-rem-ka), who witnessed the execution of his cousin and harsh treatment of people at Masarau. Setavo and I spoke at Marunga in Wide Bay. His house is not one hundred meters away from the sea and we sat outside his *hauskuk* (kitchen). It was a hot sunny day but the cool sea breeze made it bearable while also ruffling the quality of my sound recording device. We each had our own *kambang* (lime) containers in hand and were chewing *buai* (betel nut) while conversing. I spat out some of the blood red slop from my mouth onto the sand and then swept over the colourful blotch with my foot as if to hide evidence of a crime. Setavo did the same and then began his story about Lēmuthēmga. Our conversation is in Tok Pisin but I present the story here in its English translation,

> During the war he was recruited by the Australians. He and some others were recruited at the same time but I do not know their stories except for my uncle whose story I am aware of. He was recruited as a cargo boy (carrier) for the Australians. While he was a cargo boy they would train them how to use their weapons like guns (rifles). He was at Lamarieng Village which had a large Australian camp. I have also heard that they even had a club. From there they patrolled the coastline until one time they were ambushed by the Japanese and some men were captured. Lēmuthēmga was one of those who were captured and gaoled at Masarau. When he became a prisoner, they (Japanese) used him as a cargo boy too.
>
> One time, as the war went on, a Japanese commander took Lēmuthēmga to help him carry his cargo up to the bush, on the way back to Rabaul. So he carried that commander's cargo and they walked along the road from Tol to Marunga River, to the mid-section of the river from where they would go up the mountain ridge. By the time they were walking up the ridge he was carrying the commander's bag as well as his rifle. The commander was lagging behind and sensing an opportunity to make a move he rushed on ahead. As he rushed ahead and thought about what move he would make, the story I heard is that he started thinking about the harsh treatment of the Japanese against the Bainings of the south coast. They imprisoned our people, beat them, and gave them hard labour. Very hard labour. And he was also thinking of another of our uncles. He was thinking about another relative of ours by the name of Rol whom the Japanese had beheaded at Masarau. As he walked ahead and thought about all these things it became reinforced in his mind that he was working for his enemy. An enemy who had imprisoned him and had killed his cousin brother. So what should he do with that man? So he walked ahead to the top of the ridge and looked back and saw that the man was still lagging behind him. As he stood there he thought to himself, "I must kill this man now." He threw down the bag he was carrying and he stood at rest, placing the rifle on the ground in front of him too. The commander was now getting closer and closer until he was about where the coconut is (Setavo motions to a nearby coconut tree beside his house), ten meters, five, and Lēmuthēmga knelt down and grabbed the gun, cocked it and aimed it right at the commander. The commander heard the gun being cocked and looked up to see it being pointed at him by my uncle.

Setavo continues that Lēmuthēmga ignored the Japanese soldier's pleas not to shoot and pressed the trigger, killing the man. He picked up the soldier's bag and threw it, along with the rifle, off the side of the ridge. Fearing retribution from the Japanese he ran away and hid with other relatives in the bush.

Lēmuthēmga's motives to remain hidden in the bush likely included self-preservation and survival since he had experienced firsthand that aligning oneself to either side meant he would always be in danger. Yet he had clearly framed the Japanese Army as his enemies based on the ill-treatment he and his relatives had experienced at their behest.

Setavo, who has two elder brothers and a younger brother, is recognized by them as the

keeper of their father's stories because he had spent the most time with him in the village before their father's passing. Setavo gets very animated when he retells stories from the war, especially when it involves the suffering of his people and relatives. He grew up hearing firsthand accounts from his relatives who had experienced the war, including his own father who was a catechist in the Catholic Church and saw the brutality of the war firsthand. Setavo gets very sad when he retells a story about his father witnessing the torture of an Australian soldier at the hands of the Japanese at Vunapope. He is almost in tears when he talks about the Japanese massacre of Bainings at Vaingait, an old Catholic mission station established by the first German priest to the area, Fr. Alphons Meierhofer. He gets very angry at the Japanese when he talks about the Masarau prison camp and the treatment of his people there. Talking through clenched teeth and furrowed brows, he reenacts a rifle shot with his arms and fingers, 'Bang!' He exclaims when Lēmuthēmga shoots the Japanese commander. As he recounts his story, I could picture in my mind Lēmuthēmga saying, 'Good riddance!', as Setavo reenacts tossing the commanders bag off the side of the ridge.

In the context of fighting, *gurguerka* and *vrucha* mean enemy in Mali Baining, the *–cha* suffix, invariably pronounced as 'ka', commonly refers to the masculine. Female enemies would be termed *gurguerki* or *vruchi* in which the *–ki* or *–chi* denotes the feminine. Lēmuthēmga would have regarded the whole Japanese Army as *guguerta* in the plural yet despite this, his convictions are not strong enough to cause him to take up arms against them. He remains hiding in the bush until the end of the war. *Umēngacha* (or the plural *umang*)[7] refers to a particular kind of enemy, the raider, as in those persons involved in a traditional raid, *isoro* in Kaiva. It is highly likely that Lēmuthēmga categorized the Japanese Army in terms of *umang* as well since they had raided many of their gardens and villages soon after they arrived in Wide Bay.

The massacre of Baining villagers by Japanese soldiers that I allude to above is a war atrocity that seems to have escaped being captured by any military records. However, it is a story well-known among the whole Baining tribe. I followed the story, through the children and grandchildren and many other extended relatives of the only four survivors, from Marunga northwards to Merai, a village made up mostly of the descendants of those survivors. There are a few different iterations of the story, but I have recorded what I believe to be an accurate rendering based on all the different versions I have heard. The only other outside version of the story I found of the Baining massacre was recorded by the late Tolai historian, Gideon Kakabin, who made it public in 2017.

The massacre took place along the now infamous Lark Force Track that leads from the northern Baining village of Arabam to Marunga in Wide Bay. On the northern side of the Track, near Arabam, the Japanese had a base at a site called Medika. Nearby was the prewar village of Vaingait where Fr. Meierhofer, had established a mission station on Lamengi Plateau.

Kakabin's version of this story was recorded from a direct witness of the massacre, a Tolai

[7] The feminine form of this term, *umēngachi*, means flash flood.

man named To Karasin who had been pressed into service as a carrier for the Japanese. To Karasin, who was in his late 90s by the time he told Kakabin his story, explains that several American spies had infiltrated the Japanese base camp at Medika one night and killed two Japanese soldiers before leaving undetected. The nearby Baining villagers were blamed for this nocturnal raid and the Japanese sought revenge. They concocted a plan in which they asked the Bainings to dig a big tunnel into the side of the hill at their base camp. After the task was completed, they were told to prepare a feast to be held in the tunnel for their own safety from Allied air raids. As they feasted and gathered around the tunnel, the Japanese open fired on them from a machine gun, placed the night before at the entrance of the tunnel. All the villagers – men, women and children were killed (cf. Kakabin 2017: 2-3).

Bainings today speculate that their ancestors were being punished for supporting the Australians. Some of my interlocutors have suggested that they were being exterminated to remove the potential that they would support the Australians especially since the Japanese had already accosted Fr. Meierhofer for supporting Australians escaping from Rabaul in January 1942.

Hiari has strong opinions about the determination of loyalty and treachery or actions by people that might be scrutinized as being traitorous. Speaking about Papuans who were tried for alleged treason, he questions the reasons of their accusers at the time as well as writers and historians who continue to use the same frame of reference and label in their writing. In relation to Papuans who were hanged for alleged treason by ANGAU at Higaturu beginning from 1943, Hiari asserts,

> None of them, as far as I'm concerned, are traitors. For record purposes, those who handed over white people to the Japanese to be killed, are persons who were not recruited as Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels or policemen or PIBs. They were actually ordinary people who were frustrated [about] certain issues that [may have] happened prior to the war. One is harsh treatment on plantations, on gold mines, on government stations. Second, is they were not paid when the war came when they still have [outstanding grievances like with payments] and thirdly, for minor offences, our people were jailed. [People] were involved in [those kinds of] situation[s] [and] when the war came here they said, 'Okay it's time for me to get revenge'. So some Orokaivans decided to form a rebel army and get involved with the Japanese and as part of their campaign they handed over 28 Europeans to be killed by the Japanese. So I don't see them as traitors. They were playing their game. Revenge. And they should not be regarded as traitors who were working for the Australian army or American army. They were [a] completely separate group of people. They had their own agenda and they had a good reason to play the game.

The first point from Hiari's statement is that those who were accused of being traitors were in a different category of people from those whose positions and alliances had been clearly defined. Carriers, police officers, and soldiers, he posits, were roles whose actions are supposed to be consistent with the efforts of the army they worked under. That kind of consistency cannot be

expected from people who were outside of the mold of these roles, who were acting in a space of chaos and uncertainty where adaptability was necessary for survival. Hence, if someone like Moide or Oimbari had somehow given up information to the Japanese that led to the capture and killing of Australian soldiers or civilians then that might certainly be classed as treason.

The second noteworthy point is that those who acted contrary to Australian efforts during the war did so in direct retaliation for outstanding grievances. It is well documented that during the war many natives took advantage of the situation to take revenge over any clan or tribal enemies, as part of either the Allies or Japanese forces (cf. Ako 2012: xiv-xvii; & Firth 1997: 302). This did not necessarily mean that they wholly supported or even understood the intentions of the Japanese and the merits of *nanshin-ron*. It did mean that they had made a decision about a temporary alliance that would favour their own intentions for revenge or survival in most cases.

Traditionally, one hates a body of men like one's own; another clan, for instance (A. Reed 2011: 24 & Strathern 1988: 48-9). This highlights a symmetry of power between people acting under the armies they served in against each other. As Strathern notes 'the creation of inequalities between men and clan groups is based on a premise of equality, and in so far as they are rivals and enemies, men are held to share common if competitive interests' (1988: 49). These men were continuing their clan or tribal enmities using the resources and power of armies they aligned themselves to. They did so on an equal level and attacked or killed each other even when they served on the same side. Firth (1997: 302) notes for instance that 'one corporal was said to have killed his own guards with an axe because they were related to his peoples' enemies.'

Of clan and group differences, Strathern states that where interaction proceeds on the basis of and in reference to the particularity of an inherent difference between the parties then such relationships are asymmetrically construed and thus separate (1988: 49). In cases where people acted in direct contradiction to the Australian war effort, by killing or handing over civilians or soldiers to the enemy, then that group is different – they might be classed as unfamiliar or strange enemies. Yet in contrast to the invading Japanese, the Australians were a familiar group with whom people had prior interactions in spaces such as plantations, gold mines or government stations as Hiari suggests. He asserts that some of their alleged treasonous actions may have been related to grievances stemming from their interactions with particular Australians in these spaces. Hiari suggests that they were playing their 'game', the game being revenge. Discussing the idea of 'the game' with regards to inmate gangs at Bomana Correction Services in Port Moresby, Reed explains that it presents them in a constant struggle to raise the profile of their own gang and lower that of their opponents (2011: 25). This was arguably the intentions of more organized groups of people during the war.

Take for instance the 'rebel' group that Hiari refers to which was the well-known case of the 'Embogi gang' likewise described by Cranswick & Shevill (1969: 128-9). The 'gang' was named after its leader, Embogi, who would become the first of 21 Papuans to be hung by ANGAU at Higaturu in July of 1943. According to Cranswick and Shevill, Embogi preached that Papua was for the Papuans and that both the 'white man's' government and his religion must be wiped out. Having escaped prison after being gaoled for murder, Embogi's prewar movement had explicit

anti-colonial intentions. When the Japanese arrived with the same creed the two recognized each other as allies. Better armed and with Japanese money to brandish, the 'Embogi gang' commenced a systematic campaign of betrayal and death for the 'white man'. According to Cranswick and Shevill (1969: 128-9), Embogi resented the presence and influence of the Christian missionaries and wanted to make himself king of that part of Papua.

The act of designating or locating an enemy immediately suggests a state of equivalence (Harrison 1993: 51, referenced in Reed 2011: 24). Embogi, as with PIB soldiers like Katue and Matpi, had chosen sides and defined who their enemies were. In doing so they had placed themselves on equal terms with the enemies they were opposing. Twelve of the twenty-one Orokaivans hanged at Higaturu had been convicted of murder and nine were convicted of treason. Embogi alone was found guilty of both. However, given the reasons as I have explained, including the extenuating circumstances of the war and those who possibly acted 'under constraint', these men should not have been charged with treason. If they were viewed as enemies then they could have been afforded the same considerations as would have been given to prisoners of war, even if that did ultimately lead to them being charged with murder later. However, as Hiari and Orokaivans have suggested, the Australian Army and ANGAU carried out the hangings at Higaturu with a deliberate motive of deterrence, as was clear in their admonitions to the people, including school children, whom they had assembled there that day to witness the executions in late July of 1943.

Chapter 2 – A Foreign War? – The Kivung Way

The previous chapter examined the experiences and perceptions of Papuans and New Guineans during WWII which has been framed as a foreign war. Some saw themselves as 'mit in a sandwitch', caught between two massive foreign forces in a war not of their making. These people lived along the war trail and battlefields and tried to avoid the fighting by 'going bush' and not aligning themselves to a side. Others experienced the war working for one of the fighting factions as carriers, soldiers, or collaborators. These wartime experiences are important to how people reimagined their postwar relations with former colonizers and how they began reimagining themselves as a nation. Nowhere else is this more apparent than in the cargo cult literature of PNG.

Many areas affected by the war subsequently experienced the paroxysm of cargo cult or cult activities. Mair notes, there was a steady increase of cult activities in the interwar period that reached a climax at the end of WWII (1959: 114). The link between cargo cult activities in PNG and the influx of a large number of foreigners and their material goods and equipment during and between WWI and WWII is well established (cf. Trompf 1991 and Worsley 1968 [1957]). The activities and movements inspired by such cultural exchanges throughout the colonial period more generally, and culminating with WWII, is a subject area full of descriptions of how people have interpreted foreign ideas.

This chapter deals with the religious ideology of the Pomio Kivung Group or Association (hereafter just Kivung), a politico-religious group that exists today in parts of ENBP, including among the Kol, Mamusi, Mengen, Baining and Tomoip tribes. Whitehouse describes the Kivung as a 'religious movement, based around a mixture of millenarian, Christian, nationalist, and 'cargo cult' ideas' (1995:1). The Kivung headquarters is at Poro-Salel Village in Jacquinot Bay, about 132 kilometers southwest from my Tol fieldsite on the New Britain coastline, predominantly occupied by a tribe normally referred to as Nambawan Mengen (Mengen 1 in Tok Pisin). The nearest government station to Poro-Salel is Palmalmal, about 3 kilometers east of it, which is also the district headquarters for Pomio.

In its infant stages the Kivung followed closely in the trend of early cargo cult movements – being highly erratic with the haphazard creation of fantastic and novel rituals geared towards enticing or soliciting *kago* (cargo) of the *waitman*. According to Lawrence, cargo cults are 'based on the natives' belief that European goods or *kago* – ships, aircraft, trade articles, and military equipment – are not man-made but have to be obtained from a non-human or divine source (1964: 1). This *kago* were brought in by kiaps, missionaries, planters and in larger and more concentrated droves by foreign armies and their soldiers during WWII (cf. Lawrence 1964; Lawrence & Meggitt 1965; Worsley 1968 [1957]). Many cargo cult activities petered out when promised *kago* never arrived in the predicted time and members became disinterested.

The Kivung group started nineteen years after WWII and almost six decades since, its beliefs and organization have evolved and strengthened even as their membership has dwindled. It is

one of the longest lasting and well-organized of categorical cults in New Britain. I do not refer to the Kivung in their current stage as a cargo cult, or cult, as that has much negative connotations among Papua New Guineans, especially Pomio people themselves, that Kivung members today want to maintain a distance from. This was expressed to me by the highest echelons of Kivung leadership at Poro-Salel during my interactions with them between October and December of 2021. They expressed concerns about the criticism they face from their surrounding communities and especially members of the Christian Churches.

Apart from its anthropological and English meanings, the term 'cult' used in Tok Pisin tends to mean 'backwards', 'primitive', 'stupid', 'unholy' or 'un-Christian'. Such movements were described as cults or cargo cults by kiaps or missionaries in their reports or diaries and from there have entered anthropological literature (Jebens 2010: 5). These figures expressed similar disdain for such movements as being anti-missionary or anti-government, casting them as primitive and backwards.

The religious ideology of the Kivung flips the narrative of the war being a foreign one and reorganizes the geopolitics of the countries involved. It shows that there can be no singular dominant historical rendition of WWII. My interactions with the Kivung throughout my fieldwork in Pomio continually challenged my own presumptions about Papua New Guinean understandings of WWII. Kivung relations with the spirits of the foreign war dead, indeed with all spirits of the dead, unsettles the preconceived notions of the previous chapter. This chapter provides an alternative decolonizing rendering to that which is portrayed in Chapter 1, reconstituting the causality of WWII by tracing its origins back to a spatial and temporal source within Kivung cosmography. It questions the fundamental concept of 'origin' and the idea of 'the foreign'.

My ethnography of the Kivung will show how they interact with spirits of the dead almost daily within a spatial organization consisting of Mengen oral histories and Christian-synthetic ideologies and rituals. Kwon (2008: 2) notes of ghosts in Vietnam that they are primarily of concrete historical identities, whose existence, although belonging to a past era, is believed to continue to the present time in an empirical, rather than allegorical, way. Ghosts of war in Vietnam inhabit a milieu of historically reflexive morally inclusive social practice (Kwon 2008: 165). To what extent is this also the case for the ghosts of war in PNG and how are they implicated in the broader Kivung cosmology? Narokobi for instance asserts that the living inhabit the same horizontal plane as the dead. The spirits of the dead oversee the conduct of the living while the living are the custodians of the dead and are guided in their actions or inactions by them (1989: 8). How does the Narokobian world-view correlate with Kivung ideas surrounding the living and the dead?

Section 1 – The Wan-Wol Gavman

Oh Koriam's law
Make love
Make peace
And make war

Be like a tree
Growing up high
Covering all
Locally and globally

One government
Rule all
Leave no one
Populate the firmament

The Kivung way
Feeding the forgotten
Working the forsaken
Living every day

- Gregory Bablis, Marunga, Wide Bay, April 2021

As I walked along the dirt and *karanas*[8] roads of Tol with Kavon in my first week of fieldwork he told me that many bones, of the foreign war dead, had been upturned during various stages of road construction around the station. As proof he gave me a box of various bone fragments – pieces of cranium, fibula, tibia, humerus etc. – that had been unearthed on the roadside when a drain was being dug behind his house. In a more literal sense, the roads leading in and out of Tol concealed within them the 'face of death' – these skeletal remains that conjure in the mind the cosmography of an unseen spiritual world. As I went about my conversations around Tol I was collecting names of people I could talk with to give me insights into this spiritual world. The kind of people I needed to talk with were *glasman* or witch doctors.

I was also made aware of a nearby branch of the Kivung. I was told that they have a more direct relationship with the dead. Most people spoke in a deriding manner about the Kivung and their peculiar rituals like feeding the spirits of the dead. As a Papua New Guinean, I of course had known of the Kivung prior to any anthropological interest in them and all of what I had heard of them was negative. But now they had become the target of my ethnographic interests. Could I find out from them more about the place of the foreign war dead in local spiritual worlds? What does the large number of foreign deaths during WWII around Tol mean to them?

The nearest Kivung subgroup to Tol is in the village of Marunga located about six kilometers northeast of Tol Station. With the dwindling of their political influence since the year 2000, they have become more insular. And if the Kivung are insular as an intertribal political and religious group, then the Baining Kivung in particular, being a naturally shy and timid people, are doubly so. Fortunately, both Kavon and Setavo have strong social and affinal links with the Kivung in Marunga so they were able to get me an initial meeting with the Kivung Overall Supervisor, Cornelius Midang. I met with Midang first and then a week later I met with him and a larger group of Kivung members. Each Kivung branch is headed by an Overall Supervisor, or simply referred to as Overall, who is supported by several *komitis'* (Tok Pisin term for committee members) that includes both men and women.

I had my first meeting with the Marunga subgroup on 29 April 2021. This fell on a Thursday, a day they keep holy as with sabbath for Christians. In my line of questioning with them, I had problematized the place of the spirits of the foreign war dead. Are the spirits of foreign soldiers understood to be, or treated as, foreign spirits? This, however, is not a problem at all for the Kivung. When I asked this question to the group of Kivung bigmen at Marunga there was momentary silence, even some confused looks, which at the time I may have wrongly assumed meant that they did not understand what I was asking. We were all highly fluent in Tok Pisin so there could be no chance of them misunderstanding my question.

All the same, I clarified my question and asked it again before one of the bigmen answered bluntly 'Em nau, ol i stap wantaim mipla na olgeta narapla spirit na spirit blo ol *tumbuna*. (Of course, they are with us just as all other spirits and ancestral spirits are)'.

[8] Tok Pisin term for a kind of gravel that is made from a mixture of white crushed coral and rock that is used for road construction in many coastal littoral provinces.

I asked further if these spirits of foreign soldiers can 'eat' the food provided at one of their feeding houses for the dead and again the blunt response was 'Yes. Olgeta kain kain spirit i stap lo displa ples ken kaikai lo hap. (Yes. Any spirit around this place can eat there)'.

Only one bigman in the group answered my question and that was it. There were no more responses or additional statements given by any other bigmen in the Meeting House (the Kivung equivalent of a church building) we were sitting in. It felt odd for me to push a question that probably seemed silly with an obvious answer or perhaps required revealing important knowledge they were hesitant to share. Their apparent disinterest in the question initially stumped me until I began to find out more about the Kivung spiritual world in which all spirits exist in a highly structured 'society' and all spirits have a place. The place of 'foreign spirits' in the Kivung spiritual world is perhaps an insignificant part of the important work all spirits, with the support of the Kivung members and charismatic leaders, have been doing on behalf of the whole world since the inception of the group.

Indeed, Lattas has shown that the spirits of foreign soldiers of WWII do share in the food offered by the Kivung. At the Namabatu Mengen village of Matong, the spirit of an Australian soldier killed there during WWII was recorded at one of their feeding houses for the dead (Lattas 2006: 146).

Each Kivung subgroup keeps a list, often written on a signboard or noticeboard that records the names of spirits who have 'eaten' their food offerings. Lengenacha (Baining term for God), Nutu (Mengen term for God) and the names of deceased Kivung charismatic leaders appear at the top of most lists. Any local bigmen, bigmeri (big woman in Tok Pisin), chiefs, leaders, and former members may also be listed as having 'eaten' at the feeding houses. The longer lists, which are often erected in a cemetery, can contain hundreds of names of those buried in the cemetery but also including those with graves elsewhere or with no known graves but have been remembered and offered food at a nearby feeding house.

Figure 9. This is a name list, written on metal sheet, in the cemetery at the Mali Baining village of Merai. Both sides have been filled in with names. It contains the names of at least two Baining men and two Baining women who were killed by the Japanese during WWII (refer to sec. 4, chap. 1) and their bodies remain undiscovered near the wartime village of Vaingait, 22 kilometres northwest of Merai in the Baining mountains. The Kivung maintain grave plots for them at the Merai cemetery without any corpses. The red circles mark the name of (William) Lareduang and (Jareda) Mungundemi, foreshortened above to just Mungun.

The name of the Australian soldier listed at Matong is not known but the story of an Australian soldier dying of malaria during the war and buried there is well-known. On the Matong Kivung subgroup's list of names he is identified only by his country – Australia. This was undoubtedly one of the Lark Force soldiers who had escaped from Rabaul through Tol and whose comrades were massacred by the Japanese at Tol (refer to Introduction).[9]

So, what is the greater purpose of Kivung rituals like feeding the dead? I shall explain in the following, beginning with my observations of their Thursday services which they refer to as meetings.

In our meeting at Marunga, the *komitis* explained to me that the days they *ruru* (Tok Pisin for 'keep holy' or respect) are Tuesday and Friday. Reciting and discussing the *Tenpla Lo* (Tok Pisin

[9] Refer also to Gamble (2006: 182-4) that details story of Private George P. Harris who died of malaria in a village in Waterfall Bay just before Jacquinot Bay. I suggest that the Australian soldier listed on the Matong list is Harris.

for Ten Commandments), of the Christian Bible, is an important part of their services. At the first Tuesday gathering the Overall will recite to the congregation the First Commandment and explain to everyone its meaning and significance. *Komitis* and elders will contribute to the sharing as well. On Thursday they will do the same for the Second Commandment and the Third Commandment on Friday and so on for each successive Tuesday, Thursday and Friday until they have completed all the *Tenpla Lo*. This is a weekly task done all year round.

The other day the Kivung *ruru* is Thursday because it was on a Thursday that the association *ofarim* (offered in Tok Pisin) or consecrated their charismatic leaders into their eternal roles in the Wan-Wol Gavman (Tok Pisin for One-World Government). Also called the Spirit Gavman, this is the spiritual government central in the Kivung narrative of global unity.

The Kivung have a close historical association with Catholicism in Pomio hence the overlap of Catholic terms used in Kivung concepts are common as here with the idea of an offering being like a sacrifice. According to some of my informants, it would not be inaccurate to describe the Kivung as a Catholic splinter group. Most of its founding members and charismatic leaders were Catholics and regularly attended Sunday service. Many other aspects of the Kivung doctrine that I will describe stem from Catholic prayers and concepts.

Thursday coincides, as Lattas (2006: 132) corroborates, with the day that many Kivung adherents believe their recognized founding member, Michael Koriam Urekit (hereafter just Koriam as he is more widely referred to) first entered the House of Assembly building in Port Moresby in 1964 as the inaugural Member for the Kandrian-Pomio electorate.[10] This is the day he was 'offered' onto his earthly leadership role.

The Kivung are very strict disciplinarians and will always start their programs on time. Every Meeting House I have been to have clocks mounted high on the wall in the middle so that there is never a doubt about what the time is. Thursday is *ruru'd*, and as with Sundays for Catholics or Saturdays for SDAs, members must not carry out any strenuous manual labour on this day. In the morning, members must *malolo* (rest) until bath time between 12:30 and 13:00. The *belo* (bell) will be rung at 14:30 to notify everyone to make their way to the Meeting House for the service to begin at exactly 15:00. Three o'clock is when Lengenacha is said to 'come down' and join the peoples' meeting.

Everyone is expected to arrive at the venue beforehand so that the program starts at the exact scheduled timing. Anyone who arrives late is charged and pays a penalty fee of K1 or K2. My interlocutors tell me that if someone is running late it is better not to attend at all, but that person will still be questioned at the next service by the Overall or a *komiti* and may still be penalized for their absence. The penalty fee will be determined by the reason for their absence to be assessed by the Overall.

A Thursday service typically begins by reciting the Novena which is the same set of prayers the Catholics recite, including the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary and three other prayers. These five prayers are recited in sets of ten after which there is a communal discussion led by the

[10] The actual date of the first sitting was 8 June 1963, a Monday.

Overall whose role it is to explain the meaning and importance of the prayers to achieving the goals of the Kivung. All this is done in *tokples* so that people can really understand and take to heart the sharing's, messages, and meanings.

The service finishes at 17:00 but before that the *kuskus* or recorder, along with a few other members pre-appointed for the day, will quietly slip out of the Meeting House during the sharing's. They make their way to the Matmat Haus (Tok Pisin for grave or cemetery house). This is a set of two small shacks – Gavman Haus[11] and Misin (Mission) Haus. The naming of these two houses corresponds to the organisational structure of the Spirit Gavman. The Gavman Haus makes food offerings to the spirits of Kivung leaders who occupy roles in the Wan-Wol Gavman. The Misin Haus caters for spirits of Kivung leaders who have roles in what is called the Wan-Wol Church (One-World Church). The naming also reflects the two main colonial and post-colonial institutions of authority, government, and missionaries, whose organising skill and power the Kivung seek to emulate.

Each house has benches and tables with seats. Food has been served and everyone stands on the grass outside the Gavman Haus in silent concentration. The *kuskus* listen for any sign that the spirits have accepted and 'eaten' the food offerings. The sign can be any kind of sound or noise that comes from inside the house. It can be the stridulation of a cockroach or grasshopper, a gecko chirping or the ping of the roofing iron as it is heated by the sun. Any little noise is taken as a sign that the spirits have accepted and eaten the food. The noise would not have been audible had the spirits not allowed it to be perceptible to the human sense of hearing as a sign that they have accepted the food offering.

[11] Gavman Haus can also be called City House as the one in Marunga is called.

Figure 10. The Gavman Haus on the left and the Misin Haus on the right.

Figure 11. Signboard with a list of names of spirits of who have eaten in the Gavman Haus or City House. Here they have listed that Lengenacha has eaten there as well as Koriam and some other Baining bigmen who have since passed away.

Figure 12. Inside the Gavman Haus is partitioned. The kuskus stands on the other side earmarked for the spirits of bigmen like Koriam and Koimanrea.

Once the sign has been determined the assigned *kuskus* for the day brings the message back to the gathering at the Meeting House. The *pawa* or *strong* (power or strength in Tok Pisin, sometimes described as the 'spirit' of the food) has been eaten by the spirits and the physical food is now taken by the helpers and brought back to the communal *haus kuk* (literally 'house cook' in Tok Pisin or kitchen) beside the Meeting House. The food is an offering and payment towards the spirits who are petitioned to help with certain tasks and whose acknowledgement it is important to gain for the living who will one day join them in the spiritual world. The *kuskus* reports the good news that the spirits have accepted the food. If there was no sign, then this is reported and the Overall and *komitis* will interpret the meaning of the rejection and attribute it to some faults or failures on their part. He will chastise everyone for not working hard in the gardens if that is the case or penalize those who may have come late to service or committed some other offense. Members are encouraged to work harder and to follow the *Tenpla Lo* more devoutly. At the end of their service, the food brought from the Matmat Haus and other prepared food are eaten by the living.

The work of feeding the dead happens every single day of the week. On Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday this task is aligned with the order of the service of the day. Individual members, like the Overall and some *komiti*, will also have their own Matmat Haus set up and keep their own schedule and daily routine for feeding the dead. Two communal gardens are maintained in whichevery member is required to work. The Gavman Gaden, Wok Bung Gaden (Working

Together Garden), supports the Gavman Haus. The other garden supplies food to the Misin Haus and is referred to as the Paradise or Misin Gaden. The food harvested from these gardens are stored in the pantry in the communal *haus kuk* beside the Meeting House.

The spiritual world (invariably called the underground by many of my interlocutors) is a highly populated space because every single person is born with two extra persons or beings borne of the *bitona* (belly button or umbilicus) and the *bulut* (waste blood). The *bitona* being is described as the *wasman*[12] or guardian for every person that is born. Some equate these beings to guardian angels as commonly known in Christianity. The umbilical cord connects the baby to its mother while in the womb and this physical connection protects the baby and provides it with physical sustenance. Without this being acting as a conduit between the mother and the baby it would not have survived while in the womb. The navel cleavage of every human being is the physical remnant and marker of these unformed beings whose potential lives were cut short when the umbilical cord is cut at birth. The *bitona* dies when it is cut, and it must be given a proper burial.

The other being at birth is the *bulut* from the mother during the birthing process. The Kivung believe this *bulut* to be another being that has a spirit and immediately takes its place in the spiritual world when discharged. Here the biological wastes from the birthing process are seen to have the capacity or strength to form a physical human being. But even though this potential is not fully realized through physical formation of a human body, the spirits of all three have already come into existence. Hence, every person is born into a spiritual tripartite state in which the *bitona* and *bulut* spirits immediately undergo a physical death and enter the spiritual world and the person's spirit remains attached to the individual until death when it *kiraps* (rises) last. While a person lives in the physical world, his or her *bitona* and *bulut* spirits exist in the spiritual world.

The Kivung calendar is divided into three quarters that are marked by the feast days for three charismatic leaders: Koriam, Kolman Kintape and Bernard Balatape. The feast days for these leaders are held on their dates of death. What in general thinking is considered death, is in Kivung eschatology referred to as *ol i kirap* (the day 'they rose' in Tok Pisin) or the day they were 'offered' into their vital roles in the Wan-Wol Gavman. The feast days are important for continuing to 'offer'; to pray for and to support the work of these leaders. These leaders are believed to have 'risen' upon passing from the physical world and into the spiritual world. Kivung adherents say that their charismatic leaders have been offered as sacrifices or that they have offered the gifts of their services to the Wan-Wol Gavman.

My interlocutors explain that the positions their charismatic leaders now hold in the Wan-Wol Gavman were assigned to them by the association when they were still alive. Rituals like the

[12] This is not to be confused with the other type of *wasman* that refers to a *masalai* or spirit of the place but plays the same function as a guardian.

collecting of cash offerings and feeding of the dead were formulated to *baim* (meaning 'pay' in Tok Pisin) to secure these positions beforehand. All cash offerings are brought by boat to the Poro-Salel headquarters where a small building called the World Bank serves as the physical storage place for their monies. They do not have an account with any commercial banks. These and other rituals have now become routinized and part of official Kivung practice and service that are observed religiously.

Kintape has been accorded divine status as the Namba Tu Papa (Second Father or invariably the Second God) and his *kirap* day is April 29th (1995) which marks the beginning of the first quarter of the Kivung calendar. When Balatape passed away on 5 September 1975 he took up the position of Pope. This date has come to mark the beginning of the second quarter on the Kivung calendar. The Pope or the Holy Father is the supreme leader of the global Catholic community and in the same way, Balatape is the supreme religious head of the Wan-Wol Church. The Kivung believe that there should not be any religious divisions and that all churches should be united which is why Balatape has been offered to serve as Pope of this unified church. His *kirap* just over a week before PNG gained independence from Australia on September 16th is believed to be an intentional move to send him ahead to *stretim* (literally straighten in Tok Pisin or fix) the road for PNG to govern itself by securing the transformative powers of the dead. Lattas describes how Balatape was given money and 'sacrificed', 'sent ahead' to make a payment for the 'skin' of independence (2006: 146-7). This 'skin' of independence is an illusion of autonomy, but our true independence will be achieved when the Wan-Wol Gavman comes to power.

Koriam, who was believed to be a god even while still alive, passed away or *kirap* on 3 December 1978 and an annual celebration is held to mark the day which is also the beginning of the last quarter.[13] He holds the overall position of King, representing the sovereign rule of the Wan-Wol Gavman. Other important figures for the Kivung are Francis Koimanrea, who was the first Governor for ENBP in 1995, serving until 2000. His half-brother, Alois Koki, was Member for Pomio from 1979-1982. Koki held onto this seat until his death in the year 2000. Koki is the *Bosman Blong ol Daiman* (Boss of the Dead); and Koimanrea is the political head as President of the Wan-Wol Gavman. He was born on 25 December 1954, so his birth date is a holy day as aligned with the birth of Jesus Christ on the same date. For the Kivung this is no coincidence and there is a service and *kastam* (literally custom in Tok Pisin and is used to refer to any ritual or special gathering) held on Christmas Day which falls within the third quarter. Of all the leaders, Koimanrea was last to *kirap* and his position as President is subordinate to the others. This is the current Kivung leadership of the incipient Wan-Wol Gavman – the spiritual government.

In a public speech made to people in Pomio in 1964 before he went to Port Moresby for the sitting of the First House of Assembly, Koriam was said to have used the canoe as a *tok piksa* (literally meaning 'picture talk' or metaphor in Tok Pisin) for PNG as a nation and for Kandrian-Pomio as captained by the Member House of Assembly (MHA). These two canoes, he said, are paddling in a race side by side and it remains to be seen which canoe will make it to the shoreline on the other side. If one canoe is weighed down by corruption, misdirected by bad leadership and

[13] Koriam is also referred to as the Nambawan Papa (Number One Father in Tok Pisin).

stifled by mismanagement then it would lead to the sinking of the canoe. The development issues that have been plaguing PNG since independence are, for the Kivung, signs of a capsizing vessel which once sunk is when the leadership of Pomio will take over. Since Koriam was the founding member for Pomio[14], the seat is the ordained position of the Kivung. Any other non-Kivung MP would not steer the canoe into the future being envisioned and worked hard for.

The Kivung, as an organisation, follows a binary logic illustrated by the metaphor of the canoe being paddled over the sea. The association is the canoe paddling on the surface while the Spirit Gavman, the Wan-Wol Gavman that has not yet reached its full potential, is the shadow or reflection of the canoe running parallel to it below. The organization thus has a physical structure with its earthly leaders as well as the unseen substructure headed by the Kivung charismatic leaders, but both are closely connected and always running parallel. Whatever happens 'on top' directly influences the progress of the Spirit Gavman below. Man-made issues like economic crisis, corruption, or rising criminal activities are signs of a sinking canoe. There is an intentional fatalistic progression of earthly governments and countries to their ultimate demise after which

the Wan-Wol Gavman takes over. Inevitably the shadow or reflection of the canoe running parallel to it below flips over, merging all earthly governments into it. The Kivung believe that the Wan-Wol Gavman is the entity that will administer eternal and universal unity between all countries and between the living and the dead.

The organizational structure of the Kivung follows this binary logic in which the association exists and continues its work in the physical world while the Wan-Wol Gavman operates in the spiritual world. They remain separated by a 'cement' which can only be broken by adherence to some of the rituals described above. But why is there a 'cement', a barrier separating the spiritual and physical world in the first place?

[14] Pomio is now a district in ENBP while Kandrian now falls under WNBP.

Section 2 – Breaking the Barrier

Girl
Daughter, Sister
Wife, Mother

Woman, Man?
Bigman, Bigmeri?

Human, Spirit
Godman, Godmeri
Bodi

Gregory Bablis, Malmal Village, Jacquinot Bay, October 2021

During my meeting with the Marunga Kivung subgroup, they told me that the coronavirus had originated from Pomio, specifically from Wara Kalap (literally 'jumping water' in Tok Pisin and used to refer to a waterfall) in Jacquinot Bay. They advised that I go speak with their leadership at their Poro-Salel headquarters if I wanted to learn the official story. This was the prompt for me to travel to Palmalmal Station in early October of 2021.

In my one year of fieldwork around Tol, I had a constant companion in my daily research activities in an elderly man named Francis Papei. He is a distant relative of Kavon's and a Manusian too. Papei is a longtime resident of ENBP, moving to Tol around the same time as Kavon and was a part of Kavon's household when I joined them. Papei is a retired PNGDF soldier who had served during the decade-long Bougainville Crisis, an internal secessionist conflict fought between the PNG Government and Bougainville rebel groups between 1988 and 1998. He quickly took an interest in my research and the kinds of questions I was asking and began accompanying me daily in place of Kavon who had many other roles within the Tol Station community. Papei did have his apprehensions though about my interest in the Kivung because he had heard of their militaristic rules and strange rituals like feeding the dead and penalising members with monetary fines for any transgressions. He was with me in my meetings with the Marunga Kivung subgroup and like me, was now learning about them from the inside instead of just looking in from the outside. Papei was enthusiastic about following me to Palmalmal when I began planning to go there and offered to accompany me.

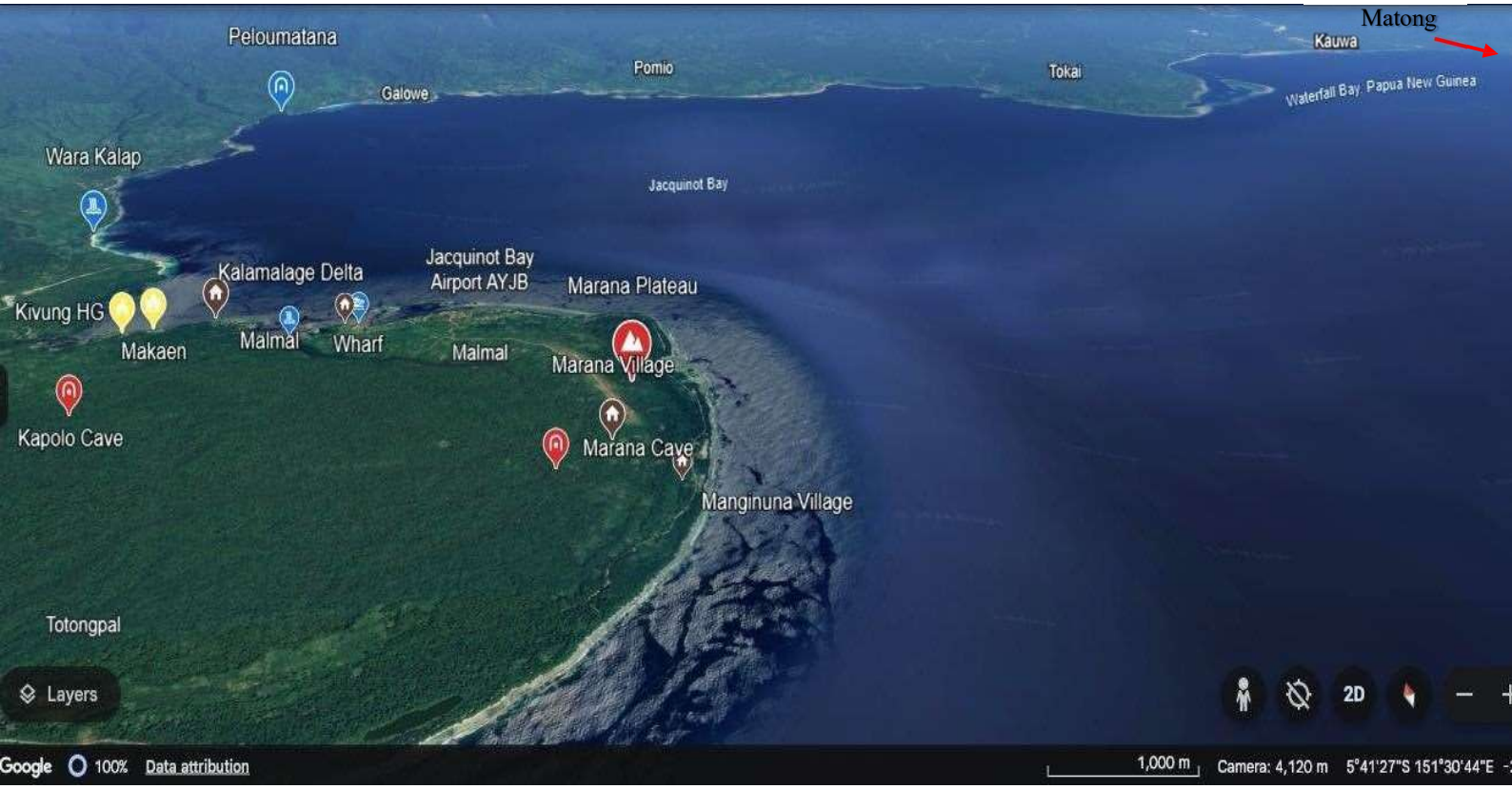


Figure 13. Map of Jacquinot Bay and the important geographical features in the Mengen-Kivung oral histories presented in Sections 2 and 3. **Google Earth** image.

We travelled to Jacquinot Bay on the ship, MV Pomio, which we had to hop on from the provincial centre of Rabaul. We arrived at Palmalmal Station on a Friday afternoon and then went by banana boat about three kilometres west to the Makaen Catholic Mission Station. I had prearranged with a local contact to reside at the old Sister's convent which now served as the resident priest's accommodation. The Kivung's historical association with Catholicism is most apparent in the physical location of its headquarters which is just a few hundred meters away from the Makaen mission grounds, separated only by the houses of Poro-Salel Village. The Makaen Catholic church was established in 1931 by Fr. William Culhane, who was the first European missionary to Jacquinot Bay. Many Kivung leaders like Koriam, Koimanrea and Koki attended Sunday service there even as they continued their work and political representation of the Kivung ways.

When Papei and I arrived at Makaen, the Filipino priest, Fr. Alito Cangayao, was away in Kokopo so the groundskeeper, Michael Kelmanetuna, was on hand to meet us and settle us into our accommodation. A local Mengen man from the nearby village of Gugulena, Kelmanetuna became an important interlocutor and guide for my three months in and around Jacquinot Bay. Other important interlocutors are Noel Botaprea and David Kamanagua from Manginuna Village, Anna Sipona and Augustine Sismanrea from Malmal Village, and Joachim Kaengiri

from Poro-Salel Village.[15] Of course there were many others who I talked with but my interactions with these five individuals provide much of the information in this and the next section. Denise Lokinap, the Director of the UPNG Open Campus Centre in Palmalmal had organized for my accommodation at Makaen. She features as well in the following narrative.

Kaengiri is the most senior congregation member of Malmal Parish and was the one with whom Lokinap had arranged for my stay at Makaen. The previous day he had been waiting at the convent to meet me but left for his home nearby when it started getting dark.

Now 85 years old, Kaengiri is a former Marist Brother who had spent much of his life outside of Pomio, teaching around the country and even studying abroad. His younger sister, Margaret Tuataprea, is the current Kivung spiritual leader. The contentious relations between the Mengen Catholics and Mengen Kivung are embodied in the relationship between Tuataprea and Kaengiri who is at constant loggerheads with his sister and the Kivung leadership. Their verbal altercations, which often escalate to the brink of physical violence, stem from doctrinal differences between their different religions. Tuataprea is considered a *god meri* (female god) by Kivung adherents which is sacrilege of the highest order for a staunch Catholic like Kaengiri.

Ironically, Kaengiri now lives within the compounds of the Kivung headquarters at Poro-Salel since he never built his own house. There he has a room to himself in a small house and is provided food daily, sometimes even leftovers from the Matmat Haus.

Most people, even the Kivung themselves, refer to their compound as *banis*, a Tok Pisin term meaning fence or referring to a fenced off area. It is commonly used to refer to a prison or gaol and is in this case a reference to the seemingly authoritarian Kivung laws. There is however no actual fence built up around the compound.

Kaengiri is a short man with a slightly hunched back and looks like a proper octogenarian as he walks very slowly and prefers to do so without the assistance of a cane. But his now frail physical state belies the passion, indeed aggression, with which he defends his religion and his church. He sat with Papei and I in the convent's kitchen the next morning after our arrival as we sipped our coffee and made light banter. He told of his travels overseas and even meeting Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II. Soon enough we began discussing my research and schedule while at Makaen and this was when Kaengiri's tone became more serious. In his high-pitched bellicose tone and waving his right index like a spear, he spoke sternly in English, and stated,

> Greg, you are the first Papua New Guinean anthropologist to come here to Palmalmal and Makaen and I want you to get the truth! You must not listen to those people (referring to the Kivung). They don't know the Word of God. They will spoil your research.

After a long verbal diatribe about the Kivung, he handed me a list of people he wanted me to

[15] I give only the villages where they are now settled and not their clans. The oral histories relating to *koinapaga* and Nutu given by Sipona and Sismanrea appear in the Appendix.

talk with. I looked over his very short list and assured him that I understood his concerns but that the nature of my research would require me to follow the story regardless of who was giving it. I sensed this was a hypersensitive issue for Kaengiri and tactfully changed the topic of our discussions. I knew I had some delicate social manoeuvring to do if I wanted to speak with Tuatrapea and her subordinates.

However, my first meeting with Tuatrapea happened that very same day and by Kaengiri's own actions, or rather inactions. After we had breakfast, Papei and I walked into Palmalmal Station to stock up on rations and to meet with Lokinap. Kaengiri held onto the convent keys and advised that he would wait to give them back to me when we returned. But Papei and I returned late in the afternoon as it was getting dark and Kaengiri had returned to his house in the *banis*. We were locked out and had no other way of getting in. After almost an hour of waiting and swatting mosquitoes in the dark, I decided we had no choice but to go and get the keys from Kaengiri in the *banis*.

Papei was very nervous about my suggestion and reminded me about the Kiving's strict rules but realized if we did not go and get the keys we were probably going to be sleeping outside. Just a few minutes' walk along the *karanas* road and we were turning into the Kivung's *banis* area. Kaengiri's small house is behind a larger two-storey duplex and in front of the World Bank and Kintape's grave. When we walked into the quadrangle Tuataprea was sitting outside on the front veranda area of the bottom deck of the unit. It was my first time there, let alone at night, and I had no idea she would even be there. Two young men were cleaning up her table after she had her dinner. She was caught off-guard by my sudden appearance. I realised this was the *god meri* and walked over to where she was seated and introduced myself and quickly explained my research before telling her why I was now standing in front of her. I knew Lattas had stayed with them when he was doing his research years before so to make sure she understood my work I added, 'Mi wokim wankain wok olsem Andru Latas tasol mi mangi PNG yet. (I do the same kind of work as Andrew Lattas but I am a Papua New Guinean)'.

Papei stood quite apprehensively at a distance in the middle of the quadrangle expecting that we would soon be charged for our trespasses. On the contrary, Tuatrapea was overjoyed that a Papua New Guinean was doing similar work as Lattas. A wide grin came across her face and she took both my hands in hers and shook them vigorously, while effecting a series of short shrieks – a sign of her excitement and affirmation of what I was telling her. Each shriek was made at intervals at the end of each statement I made. The loudest shriek came when I said that I do the same work as Lattas. She then apologised to me and said,

> Yu no laik tok save na kam bai mipla redi na welkamim yu gut. Lukim, mi no kisim tok save na nau mi nogat samting lo givim yu. But mi hamamas. Fil fri lo kam na kisim stori lo mipla lo hia. Tumoro monin yu mas kam bek na bai mi welkamim yu gut.
>
> You should have informed us and come so that we would be prepared to welcome you properly. See, now I wasn't informed and I have nothing to give you. But I am happy. Feel free to come here and get our story. Tomorrow morning you must come back and I will welcome you properly.

By now Kaengiri had heard the commotion and was standing outside his small house across the quadrangle looking on. I apologised to the *god meri* and excused myself to go and see him and Papei who was already standing with him and chatting. I knew Kaengiri would be upset that I had met his sister, but he could not much fault me for going to the *banis* to collect the convent keys from him.

Tuataprea is more commonly referred to as Joe Margaret or just Bodi. Joe is the name of Margaret's unborn son whom she lost through a miscarriage. In Margaret's miscarriage the *pikinini blut* (blood child in Tok Pisin) was named Joe Baikolalkia and he is regarded and honoured as the Black Jesus of the Kivung (cf. Lattas 2010: 107-8). Joe is one of the spirits who possesses and speaks through the vessel of Margaret's body. Margaret or Bodi is considered a *god meri* (female god) by Kivung adherents. Her physical body is a holy vessel, a medium through which spirits of (deceased) Kivung leaders give messages and instructions to the people. Margaret's own spirit has already gone on to be with Nutu. Bodi is a biological female but exists in an androgynous state as her gender is determined by the spirit that is occupying the physical body at any one time. Because of this, Bodi often dresses and acts like a man. Bodi is routinely possessed by the spirits of deceased Kivung leaders who now hold key positions in the Wan-Wol Gavman. These leaders include Kintape, who is Margaret's late husband, and Koriam himself. Technically, any spirit can inhabit Bodi but it is a privileged vessel for the Kivung leadership who must pass on messages and instructions to their counterparts and people in the physical world.

The Kivung second in charge is Otto Tokal who is referred to as *Was Papa* (caretaker father in Tok Pisin), charged with looking after Kolman's widow when he passed away. Tokal's role is likened to Joseph's as the earthly caretaker father of Jesus Christ. Willie Rave, the nephew and adopted son of Koki, is third-ranked in the Kivung hierarchy and he is their political representative. The Kivung have sponsored Rave for the Pomio Open seat in the last two National Elections but have failed to depose the incumbent, Elias Kapavore. Tokal and Rave are responsible for disseminating messages and instructions received through Bodi; collecting cash offerings from outlier Kivung subgroups; mustering support during the National Elections; receiving important guests and so on.

I had been given a warm welcome by the Kivung spiritual leader and based on that reception I intended to return the next morning to the *banis*. Come Sunday morning and people were making their way to their various churches. At Makaen some clergy and elders came in earlier than the congregation to clean up and prepare for the service. I made a hot cup of coffee and stood outside the convent kitchen sipping it when a church deacon walked down the grassy footpath leading from the *karanas* road toward where I was standing and greeted me,

> 'Monin turu Patere, sori mi kam lo kisim Baibel na bilas lo kisim go lo lotu. (A very good morning, Father, sorry I have come to get the Bible and robe to take to church)', he asked very respectfully, thinking I was a new priest since Fr. Cangayao had not yet returned.
>
> 'Sori, mi no Patere. Mi kam stap tasol lo konvent. (Sorry, I'm not a priest. I've just come

to stay here at the convent)', I replied as we both broke out in laughter.

He then went into the convent to look for the items himself while I stood and scanned the road, waiting to see when Kaengiri would make his way to the mission grounds. That morning he did not turn towards the convent as he did the previous day, instead walking straight ahead in the direction of the church building. After he had gone, I walked over to the *banis.*

As I walked into the quadrangle, two men were standing in the same place I was the previous night talking with Bodi. They finished their conversation as I approached and then walked up and shook hands with Bodi, apologising to her as they did so. The two men were Tokal and Rave who had just returned. The previous day they were carrying out some awareness at another village and because they finished their program late, they had to spend the night there. When they returned that morning, Bodi charged them with an offence and they each paid a penalty fee of K50 to Bodi for their transgressions. This was the little ceremony I witnessed as I walked in.

Tokal and Rave are very intelligent and respectable men. They greeted me expressed enthusiasm about my research. The three of us stood in the quadrangle conversing. After a few minutes, Bodi called silence and came forth with a *kakal*, a special necklace made from cowrie shell. She called me over to her at the veranda railings and placed the necklace around my neck saying that it was my 'passport' to go back and forth to them at any time. I thanked her and told the trio that I was interested in visiting Wara Kalap and to learn the story of how the coronavirus started. Bodi immediately offered the Kivung banana boat and ordered the skipper to take me there. I thanked Bodi and then walked back to Makaen to let Papei know. Sunday service had finished by then and Lokinap and her daughter and son had come over to the convent and were having breakfast with Papei in the kitchen. They usually walk the three kilometres from Palmalmal Station to Makaen for Sunday Mass. I informed them of my plans and Lokinap's teenaged kids were excited about going to Wara Kalap, which is also a popular spot for local tourism.

Water gushes out the side of a mountain from an underwater river system, common in the Sublime Karst area common in this part of the Nakanai Ranges. The cave opening facing the sea is around ten meters wide, and the drop is not more than two meters. The white water rushes out furiously like a faucet that has been turned on at full blast. The fresh icy cold water forms a small creek that flows down parallel to the sea for a few hundred meters, separated by a high stretch of white sandy beach, before the delta conjoins the two bodies of water. It was at this site, below the waterfall, where Bodi bathed again after a decade and a half of abstinence from washing. Apart from Bodi, Lattas notes two other major cult leaders who at times would refuse to wash for long periods. Both claimed that cargo and a new world would come from the dirt on their skins (2010: xxxvi). In this sense the change they sought was immanent, literally from within themselves or from the *deti* washed off their bodies.

Rave explained to me that when Bodi bathed for the first time again on 21 December 2019, the dirt and grime that was washed off was carried out to the sea. As the *deti* was being carried away by the stream, trace amounts of it got washed onto the riverbank just below the falls. On

this spot is where one of the spirits that uses Bodi manifested itself in the form of a singapore (Chinese taro). The singapore remains as a sign of the regenerative power of the *deti*, the bulk of which was washed out to sea where it spread across the world. This bodily filth represents all the sins of the flesh which mutated to the coronavirus, became airborne and spread like wildfire, eventually reaching pandemic status, and becoming a global crisis. The date of Bodi's long overdue bath just a few weeks before the coronavirus started making headlines in PNG is no coincidence for the Kivung.

Figure 14. Photograph of a patch of singapore a few meters downstream from where Bodi had her first bath at Wara Kalap.

The spirits of the dead, from all lands, are very busy working towards building the Wan-Wol Gavman and Wan-Wol Church, supported and incentivised by ritual offerings of food and money that the Kivung make. The coronavirus' disrespect of national and international borders is a uniting force to assist the Kivung's geopolitical agenda. This is the reset button in which the whole world can be incorporated into the Kivung cosmology through the mass deaths caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Lattas notes that, 'The big *sens* (change) is close because, as I was repeatedly told, for **something good** to come up, **something no good** must come first' (2006: 147) (my own emphasis). The occurrence of natural disasters in PNG like the Aitape tidal wave in 1998 and the Rabaul volcanic eruption of 1994 are signs that the 'cement' will soon be ruptured, and the Wan-Wol Gavman will come into power to unite all countries and develop them to the same stage. The recent coronavirus pandemic falls into this category of disasters or crises as markers of imminent 'big *sens*' that serve a functional purpose in the progression of history and the effectuating of the Wan-Wol Gavman. To understand this, we must return to Mengen oral histories as the foundation of Kivung theology.

The organizational structure of the Kivung is influenced, according to Lattas (2006: 132), by a 'pervasive binary logic' that can be found in Nambawan Mengen kinship system with two principal matrilineal moieties – Magagiana and Marana. This duality exists in the story of the sibling gods, Nutu Avolau (Mengen for Big God) and Nutu Sina (Small God). These two represent moral polarities – the former being good, and the latter associated with mischief. There are several versions of the oral histories[16] surrounding Nutu and one story tells of tensions between the two stemmed from competing affections over a female. At the time the first village was located at Marana, a plateau after which the present village is named.

As the rivalry between Nutu Avolau and Nutu Sina came to a head, the latter and his supporters departed the village on a boat (sometimes canoe) along the Kalamalage River and out to sea. This river empties into Jacquinot Bay less than a kilometre west of Palmalmal Station. Nutu Sina and his group populated other parts of the world and cornerstone of the advancement of this Mengen diaspora was *koinapaga*, the special Mengen *save* (knowledge in English). In taking away *koinapaga*, they deprived successive generations of Mengens and Papua New Guineans today, the means to develop themselves to the same stage.

Nutu Sina's egress from Marana with *koinapaga* instituted the Hatwok stage of the modern era that the world now subsists in which the Kivung, with the support of all spirits, are working hard through. In this period of Hatwok, there is no heaven or hell but rather a kind of moral reckoning whereby bad spirits are cordoned off to work in their own spaces. The space for bad spirits is likened to a hell, described as having to do a lot of hard-work but which is really the same burden that all beings, living and dead, must carry. Eric Kuang, a (Baining) Marunga *komiti*, explains that,

> 'I nogat hel. Hel em hatwok tasol ya. Kain olsem nau yumi stap lo ples graun ya em olsem hel yumi stap ya. (There is no hell. Hell is just having to do hard-work. In a sense we are all now living in a hell on earth)'.

This hell is a metaphor for hard-work, necessary to progress to the next stage (cf. Lattas 2010: 66-7).

The Wan-Wol Gavman works to revivify the original state of unity at Marana when everyone had equal access to *koinapaga*. But procuring this seminal state of being will be achieved in stages, represented by the principles of Hatwok (Hardwork), *Save* (Knowledge) and Justice.

[16] I refer to these stories as oral histories instead of myths because the Mengen, both Christians and Kivung, believe them to be true stories of their ancestors and not fictional.

Figure 15. Kivung logo of the three principles of Hardwork, Knowledge and Justice emblazoned on top of the association's calendar.

Figure 16. The same triagonal rendering of the principles important to the Kivung have also been put on a blue flag and represented further by three stars.

Times of natural disasters and crises throughout history have been moments of possible 'big *sens*' to transition to the *fest kamap* (first stage), also called Aria Atoriti (Area Authority).[17] This marks the *Save* or Knowledge stage when *koinapaga* will be returned and shared equally to develop all countries to an equal level. Episodes of crises, within Kivung eschatology, are moments that augur the potentiality of breaching the 'cement'. Retrospectively, WWII is part of

[17] The concept and phrase 'Area Authority' gained usage in the 1960s when the new Local Council system was introduced. A Council, which is the equivalent of a Ward today, could sometimes be referred to as an Area Authority.

a series of unfolding crises in which the 'cement' could have been broken, but although not actualising, cumulatively signal a future time when the barrier will eventually be broken. In the Kivung cosmology, WWII was not a foreign war but one of the proleptic events like the coronavirus pandemic that ostensibly began with the egress of Nutu Sina from Marana with *koinapaga*. Kivung ideology looks back in time to crisis events like WWII for their causal efficacy, organising them into a linear sequence of events that accumulatively lead to the inevitable corollary of breaking the 'cement' barrier.

All spirits of the dead have an important role to play in the progress of history from the *Hatwok* stage to the *fest kamap* or Aria Atoriti. The rubrics of Kivung beliefs and practices comprise many rituals that are worked with the intention of 'buying a future government' with reports, banked money, confessions, purifying rituals, and the feeding of the dead (Lattas 2006: 146). These penance-based rituals are geared towards generating money whose purifying power is invested in the dead. These ritual investments with the dead create debt, obliging them to work on behalf of the living to create the joint venture of the Wan-Wol Gavman. The Kivung are very altruistic and say that the work they are doing is for the benefit of everyone in the world. They pray for the spirits of all who have died, and they make money offerings to pay penance for their sins too.

The breaking of the 'cement' barrier inaugurates the *Save* stage that culminates with the Justice stage or *las kamap* (Tok Pisin for final stage) where all beings, living and dead, will live in unity under the Wan-Wol Gavman. This unified state is also referred to as Heven Polity (Tok Pisin for Heaven Polity).

What does this mean for the ghosts of war? If all people originate from Marana, then do all their spirits return to the eponymous plateau upon death? How does Kivung ideology organise the considerable number of 'foreign' spirits, including those of the soldiers of WWII that met their demise in and around PNG?

Section 3 – The Selenelion: Looking Over the Dead

We the people knew Him before they came
His art and beauty we saw everyday
We imbued Him into our *housboi's* frame
Gardens grow not least 'cause to Him we pray

Bountiful harvests are a seasonal trend
Many fish we get from around the bay

You'd think the seafood buffet wouldn't end
We call and tuna come at no delay

But when they came, they hid you in the Book
And said you were not from around this place
We searched 'til we had nowhere else to look
Far away we fell from your saving grace

Still every day you watch us from the sky
When celestial bodies perch up on high

- Gregory Bablis, Makaen Catholic Mission Station, November 2021

The mission station grounds at Makaen cater for a primary school and teachers houses apart from the church building, catechist's house, Sister's convent, an old dilapidated double storey house that used to be the priest accommodation, a workshop, the church building and a grassy playing field in the middle. It also has its own small jetty – a feature most Catholic mission stations by the sea have. The mission station is located between Malmal Village to the east and Poro-Salel Village to the west. One afternoon as the days' heat was subsiding, I walked from the convent to the mission jetty to enjoy the cool afternoon breeze that blows in from across the bay. As I sat on the cement slab and looked across Jacquinot Bay the moon had risen, moving up to its place in the sky while the sun appeared reluctant to set. The two celestial bodies aligned almost perfectly upon the western horizon over the Nakanai Ranges. From my vantage point on the shoreline, it looked like the eyes of God staring down at me on Earth as His face turned all the hues of red, orange, and purple. As I stared at this magnificent vista, I could not help but wonder how such a selenelion[18] would have affected and influenced the belief, perspective, and life of the ancient Mengen. How small and insignificant they must have felt and how powerful and magical they must have thought Nutu to be.

I wrote the prefatory sonnet while thinking about some of the ideas coming from my interviews and observations. It hints at how Mengens, past and present, have reacted and interpreted different aspects of Christianity. To understand how the notion of 'origin' works in the Christian-syncretic ideology of the Kivung there are multiple spheres of influence that must be considered.

[18] A *selenelion* or *selenehelion*, also called a *horizontal eclipse*, occurs where and when both the Sun and an eclipsed Moon can be observed at the same time (Wikipedia, 2024 *Lunar Eclipse*).

Kivung beliefs and ideas about their spiritual world are influenced by the Mengen culture, Christian ideas, and the history of colonialism and Western influences in general. The beliefs and rituals of Kivung subgroups, among the Baining and Sulka tribes for instance, are influenced by their own oral histories but which seem not to seep into official Kivung doctrine that is primarily shaped by Nambawan Mengen leadership at Poro-Salel. Where the local culture and leadership of a subgroup overtake the official Kivung practices, they will break away as with the Novena of Ili and Merai, which are recent Baining offshoots, and the splinter groups at Dadul and Sunam that Whitehouse (1995) studied but which no longer exist.

The eclectic and dynamic nature of Kivung beliefs equally requires an eclectic methodological approach for analysis. In trying to understand Kivung beliefs of the spiritual world I consider the different cultural contexts that give shape to their ideas. Here I take a similar approach as theologians studying religions in postcolonial contexts in Africa and the Pacific. West (2018: 195) for instance notes the comparative method that deals with characterizations of biblical hermeneutics are portrayed as 'bipolar' in which **African context** and **biblical text** (my own emphasis) interpret each other. Within the South African societies he works in, West observes 'three intersecting poles' of analysis to consider: the local context, the biblical context and the third being the ideo-theological forms of dialogue between the local, in his case, African context, and biblical text. With regards the biblical hermeneutics of the Pacific Region, he acknowledges that there are signs of similar 'tri-polar elements' (West 2018: 195). The Christian syncretic beliefs of the Kivung, such as I have been describing in the previous sections, portray multiple 'poles' of influence that shape their beliefs about the spiritual world. This is apparent in terms of language alone. For instance, the Baining term for God is Lengenacha, Mengen is Nutu and Sulka is Noot. Each of these cultures have different concepts of God that are based on their own oral histories but all of which acknowledge that this is the same God of the Bible.

These different 'poles' of influence come to bear on the continuing exercise of the 'geolocation' of origin and how that determines where spirits of the dead ultimately settle. In the Mengen context, spirits of the dead are believed to return to Marana. This place is also acknowledged by the Kivung as the final settlement of spirits of the dead from all over the world, with the headquarters of the Wan-Wol Gavman at Poro-Salel, seven kilometres away from the plateau. Kivung adherents at Marunga first mentioned Marana to me even though traditionally they have their Baining places where spirits of the dead would go.

Marana is central to the Mengen creation story. Today the northern part of Marana Plateau is mainly taken up by the two kilometre stretch of airstrip with a small terminal building. The southeastern section of the plateau is predominantly garden area for the clans occupying Manginuna and Marana villages. An eponymous cave is located at the bottom of a hill beside the road less than a kilometre away from the village.

Marana Cave is where Nutu created the first human beings. The cave walls display some *nutlili* (god's hand-marks or drawings in Mengen tok ples) and a few scattered human remains. A

few hundred meters south along the road, a small creek called Nanasa runs parallel to the road. These two geographical features are important in the Mengen creation story.

My Manginuna interlocutor, Kamanagua, recounts their version of the Mengen creation story. He tells me in Tok Pisin that,

> Nutu i creatim man na em wan bin stap lo Marana. Em wan i stap i go na bihain Nutu sore long em na em i creatim wanpla moa man long poromanim displa nambawan man. Displa nambatu man Nutu i bin makim i narakain liklik long wonem skin long praivet hap blong em i stret tasol. Tupla stap i go na Nutu skelim olsem sampla samting no stret bikos tupla man yet stap na nogat wei long ol lo kamapim ol next lain blo ol yet ken. So wanpla taim Nutu kisim displa ston glas mipla kolim long naunga, o obsidian lo Inglis, na putim long namel long wanpla kavivi buai diwai mipla kolim long Iisi. Iisi lo tok ples em eksen blo kating na displa buai i still gat displa mak long namel blong em we Nutu i bin putim glas ston ya. Bihain nau Nutu tokim displa narapla man we praivet blong em i stret lo kalapim buai. Lo kam daun Nutu tokim em lo slide kam daun lo buai diwai. So taim man ya slide go daun nau glas ston i katim praivet hap blong em na sua i kamap. Blut i ron na sua no drai gut na i kamap bikpla tasol man kisim bagarap ya i haitim lo barata blo em. Bihain liklik nau tupla man ya go pulapim wara na nambawan man i go pas lo go pulamap. Tupla wokabaut go klostu nau Nutu tokim nambawan man lo kam bihain na barata blo em lo go pas. So displa nambatu man we em i kisim bagarap go pas na taim em bendaun lo pulamapim wara, barata blo em i lukim samting blo em na sikin bilong em i kirap lo makim pasin nogut wantaim em. Lo displa nau ol i bin kolim wara ya lo Nanasa. Nanasa lo Inglis i minim incest bikos tupla barata i makim pasin nogut lo tanim bek lo ol yet lo displa wara. Olsem na ol Pomio o Mengen lo bifo yet no sa kaikai buai bikos lo displa stori. Em nau tasol ol man stat lo kaikai buai. Bikos taim yumi kaikai buai na i ret em sa luk olsem bulut blo ol meri taim ol sik mun o bulut blo displa nambatu man we glas ston i bin katim em lo Marana na em kamap meri. So taim yumi sa kaikai ret buai, lo wanpla lukluk em olsem yumi makim fani lo ol meri o yumi no rispektim ol.

> Nutu created man and he lived alone at Marana. He lived alone for some time before Nutu felt sorry for him and created another man to be a companion for the first man. The second man that Nutu made was a bit different because the skin on his private area was just straight. The two men continued living there until Nutu figured that something was not quite right because the two had no way of reproducing their next line or generation. So one time Nutu got a piece of stone glass that we call *naunga*, obsidian in English, and put it in the middle of a *kavivi* betel nut tree we call Iisi. Iisi refers to the action of cutting in tok ples and that particular type of betel nut still has the mark or scar in the middle of its trunk where Nutu had inserted the glass stone. After that Nutu told the man with the straight skin where his privates are to climb the betel nut tree. He instructed the man to slide down the trunk of the tree when descending. So when the man slid down the glass stone cut the man's private area and an open wound formed. Blood continued to flow

> from the open wound which did not heal quickly but the man hid his injury from his brother. Later on the two brothers went to fetch water and the first man went ahead. As they got closer to the creek Nutu told the first man to fall behind and allow the second man to take the lead. So the second man who had been injured went ahead and when he bent over to fetch water his brother saw his private part and became physically aroused and wanted to have sex with him. It is because of this that they call the creek Nanasa. Nanasa means incest in English because that is where the two brothers had sex, there at the creek. It is because of this story that the people of Pomio or Mengen have not chewed betel nut since that time. It is only recently that our people started chewing betel nut. Because when we chew betel nut and it turns red it looks like female's menstrual blood or the blood of the second man who was cut by the glass stone at Marana subsequently turning him into a female. And so chewing red betel nut, from one perspective, is to make fun of or disrespect women.

This story tells of how man and woman were created and then given the capacity to reproduce. Two clans – Marana and Magagiana – emerged and settled in the first village of Marana. At some stage Nutu Sina sailed abroad with his group of supporters and they populated the rest of the world. White people and all 'foreign' others are in essence descended from Mengen ancestors. There is common ancestry between whites and blacks, of which all other skin colours are just different shades of. These people have *tanim* (Tok Pisin for turned or changed) skin colours over time while inhabiting other parts of the world. Since the breakup of the two Nutu's and Nutu Sina leaving Marana with *koinapaga*, disunity has accrued to an incorrigible state, cohering in the 'cement' barrier that separates the living from the spiritual world and the redemptive powers of the Wan-Wol Gavman that the Kivung have been working hard to institute (cf. Lattas 2006: 144). Global relations thus remain strained and unity harder to attain with the increase of many different governments and churches.

Through the Kivung lens, what did the great influx of 'foreign' others and technologies during WWII mean then? The events of WWII can be seen as a crisis which could have potentially marked the transition from the Hatwok stage to the *fest kamap* (Aria Atoriti). Also called the Save stage, this intermedial stage – between Hatwok and Justice – will be typified by sharing of knowledge and technological advancements. During this phase the underdeveloped places of Pomio and PNG that had been denied *koinapaga* will be progressed to the same level of affluence as other parts of the world that have benefited from the special Mengen *save*. Indeed, the large number of Australian, Japanese, and American soldiers that came to the shores of PNG during WWII are deemed not foreigners but rather descendants returning to share *koinapaga* and the material goods and equipment made using the special Mengen *save*. Since the 'cement' was not breached at that time, the Kivung continually look to other moments of crisis that will mark the transition to the Save stage.

The Kivung interpretation of the Mengen creation story is that, since all humans are descended from the first two who were created at Marana, all spirits of the dead will return to settle there. The overriding Mengen beliefs are more nuanced and individuated by clans. The

notion of ‘origin’ that organises the spirits of the dead in their cosmology follows the logic of *palang pupuna*. *Palang* is the place or spiritual space where spirits of the dead go to settle. *Pupuna* or *puna* means base or *kamap* (Tok Pisin for ‘spring forth from’ or origin). So *palang pupuna* literally means ‘place of origin’. Every person has their own *palang pupuna* and to that their spirits will return.

As an example, Kamanagua explains that his mother’s clan, the Gula Clan, trace their origins back to a site called Peloumatana.

Figure 17. Peloumatana located a few kilometres up the coast from Makaen.

This natural cave over the sea, located seven kilometres northeast of Wara Kalap, is linked to the story of how the sea came to be. Peloumatana translates to *ai blo solwara* or ‘eye of the sea’ in Tok Pisin because it is where the seawater sprang out from and filled up the Earth. Peloumatana is Kamanagua’s *palang pupuna* where his spirit will settle when he dies. Furthermore, the location of Peloumatana near to Wara Kalap, where the coronavirus began its global spread, is no coincidence and shows the capacity for Mengen events to effect change in the rest of the world.

According to Kamanagua, sometimes when a person dies or is soon to die, a green light called *malo kana* (in Mengen *tokples*) can be seen streaking across the sky but not very high, just above the tops of the coconut trees. The *malo kana* is the spirit of the person who has died and is returning to their *palang pupuna*. People pay attention to the audible and visual signs of the direction the *malo kana* goes because the trajectory of the *malo kana* or the place it lands

indicates to others which clan the deceased person is from. If people see a *malo kana* moving in the general direction of, or landing at Peloumatana for instance, then they know that a member of the Gula Clan has died or is about to die. Kamanagua further explains that,

> Sampla taim bai malo kana o spirit blong man bai flai i go na bai em go sindaun lo han blo wanpla diwai antap lo aria blo em na em bai sore na tanim lukluk lo ol lain blo em. Em bai sindaun liklik taim pastaim pinis nau bai em kalap go insait lo palang blong em. Tripla day bihain lo ol lain blo em planim bodi blo em bai ol i makim kaikai blong em lo frim ol yet lo wok ken. Lo displa taim em spirit blo dai man bai go long wanpla maunten lo Matong ol i kolim Litu Rae Koinga. Litu minim mauten na Koinga minim sore so em maunten blong sore. Em bai sanap liklik lo hap na wari pastaim nau bai em go daun na dringim wanpla wara ol kolim lo Me Ae Lopogo. Me em wara, Ae minim blo na Lopogo minim lus tingting so em wara blo lus tingting. Em bai dringim displa wara so em ken lus tingting lo ol lain blo em na go sindaun gut lo palang pupuna blo em na tu ol lain blo em stap laif yet ken lus tingting lo em na noken wari tumas lo em na stap gut.

> Sometimes the *malo kana* or spirit of the dead person will fly and go and sit on a branch of a tree above his area and he will turn to look back at his family and friends in sorrow. The persons' spirit will sit for a little while and lament before it jumps into its *palang*. Three days after his people have buried his body, they will have a feast to free themselves and allow them to work again and continue normal living again. It is at this time that the persons' spirit will go and stand on top of a mountain at Matong called *Litu Rae Koinga*. *Litu* means mountain and *Koinga* means sorrow so it is the 'mountain of sorrow'. He will stand a little while there and lament before he goes down and drinks from a creek called *Me Ae Lopogo*. *Me* means water or river, *Ae* is a possessive term and can mean of. *Lopogo* means forgetting so it is the 'water of forgetting'. He drinks this water so that he can forget about his family and friends and go and settle properly at his *palang pupuna* and at the same time his family and friends who are still alive can forget about him as well and not worry too much and continue living.

The term *palang* can also be used to describe something that is sacred or something that is hidden so in that sense refers to the hidden or unseen places of origin inhabited by the spirits of the dead.

By the logic of *palang pupuna*, spirits of foreign soldiers killed during WWII in the Pomio area return to their places of origin as determined by their own histories. The Kivung interpretation of this Mengen context is that all spirits return initially to Marana where they reside in a kind of purgatorial state, while continuing to work hard. Once the world has progressed to the *las kamap* of Heven Polity then spirits are allocated their settlement spaces based on their *palang pupuna* as determined by their clan histories. Here this concept of *palang pupuna* operates on a dual logic that works either way it is inverted.

As I have noted with the Marunga (Baining) Kivung and as Lattas has observed at Matong

(Nambatu Mengen), the spirits of soldiers killed during WWII can and do eat the food offerings at the Kivung Matmat Haus. I suggested to Kuang, the Kivung *komiti* at Marunga, the scenario of an Australian soldier and a Japanese soldier who would have been fighting against each other during WWII, meeting in the spiritual world. I asked if that animosity and political tension continues after death. He explained that those who were enemies in life do not continue being enemies after death because in the spiritual world there are no racial divisions as everyone is of the same race and are working towards the same goals (cf. Lattas 2006: 143). The *Me Ae Lopogo* or 'water of forgetting' is a mechanism for shedding the worries and problems of one's former life. This is important for spirits to concentrate their efforts on the important work of breaking the 'cement'.

The period of Heven Polity is also described as a judgement day when a final moral reckoning takes place, and good spirits are permanently separated from the bad who are left to a hellish seclusion of eternal hard-work. Heaven and hell do not exist in the Kivung cosmography, so a persons' spirit does not ascend or descend.[19] Like most Melanesian religions, they believe that the spiritual world exists on the same temporal plane as the physical world albeit invisibly.

Kivung adherents say that there will only be one country, yet as with any other cultural grouping that imagines itself, or seeks to find itself as a nation, they do not imagine themselves as coterminous with all of mankind (cf. Anderson 1983: 7). Kuang explains the organizing logic under the Wan-Wol Gavman once Heven Polity is reached,

> Em nau yumi go insait nau bai yumi stat rilisim ken nau igo bek nau. Em nau bai brukim yumi nau bai tok olsem yu bai yu stap lo own tok ples, own lotu blo yu yet, own wok blo yu yet, em yu bai go bek ken lo own wok blo yu yet, em yu bai go bek ken, ol tok kantri by kantri, ol sa tok olsem nau. Ol sa tokim mipla olsem. Ol tok Baining kantri yet. Olsem mipla Sipik kantri yet. Mengen kantri yet. Sulka kantri yet. Em nau em bai yumi go insait nau em bai yumi olgeta bai yumi go bek nau lo disla. Em nau bai yumi base nau lo ol histri nau. Histri em igat pawa na em bai kamapim yumi lo gutpla senis na gutpla samting.
>
> Once we get into this place we will then begin reverting to our usual places. We will start to be segregated and they will say that you go and stay with your own language mates, your own churches, your own areas of work, going country by country, that is what they say. They say Baining country will be on its own. Sepik country on its own. Mengen country on its own. Sulka country on its own. So, once we achieve this then we will all revert back to our usual groupings. We will be grouped based on our histories. History is powerful and it will create good change for us and good things for us.

Hence, once unity is achieved then history becomes the sorting criteria by which settlement is determined. Following the logic of *palang pupuna*, the envisioned collective will have divided regions organised by geography and history but will be administered by one government and

[19] I use these terms very loosely here because heaven and hell cannot be located physically or placed geospatially, above or below, but might be described, according to Fr. Cangayao, as the experience of true happiness and unity with God.

have one church. This seems counterintuitive to the unifying cause of the Wan-Wol Gavman, but again operates on a Mengen notion of inversion that is rooted in oral histories surrounding Nutu's innovative prowess which I will briefly detail.

This story tells of how a crisis event created a desperate situation that inspired the ingenuity of Nutu to contrive the design of the first canoe. It follows that there was a great deluge at a time when Nutu lived in a cave of the kind commonly found in the sublime limestone karst geology. The cave, called Kapolo, is situated on the northwestern base of Marana Plateau. My Malmal interlocutors showed me this cave when they recounted this story of Nutu.

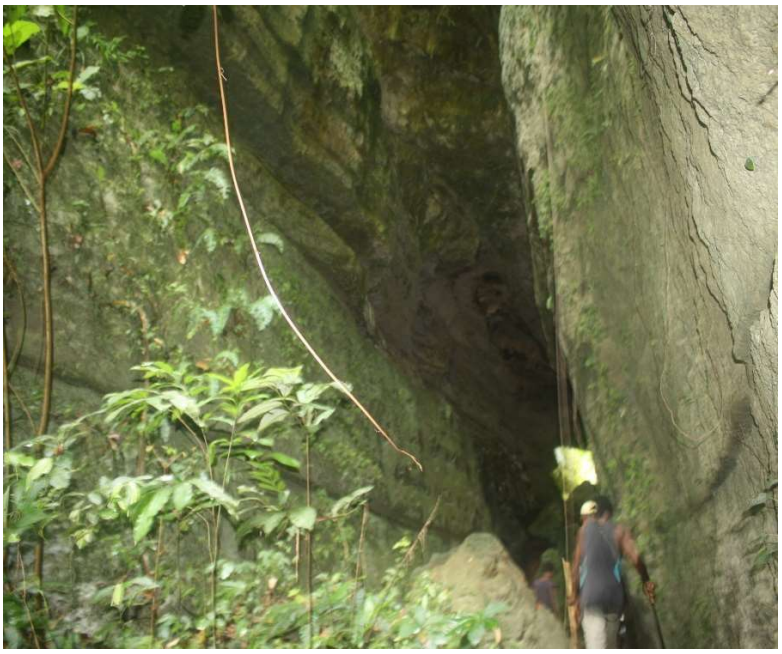


Figure 18. Outside view of the eastern entrance of Kapolo Cave.

Kapolo cave is more than ten meters high at the eastern entrance and more than fifty meters in length. Its large size and space made it a suitable shelter and hiding place for locals during WWII. The western side of the cave has a closed off section that Nutu used as a room in this story of the deluge.

Figure 19. View of Kapolo Cave looking out from its western entrance. To the right is Nutu's room.

The water kept on rising, threatening to drown Nutu as he lay there on his back looking up to the curvature of his cave room ceiling. Contemplating how he would evade the impending danger he had an epiphany, realizing that the same shape of his shelter that kept him dry whilst under it, if inverted, could keep him afloat and dry if built using appropriate materials to fashion a type of vessel. This is how Nutu came up with the design of the first canoe which is the inverted shape of the architectural trough of his cave shelter. The cave design also lends itself to the design of the *giung*, Mengen tok ples for *hausboi* (Tok Pisin for 'boy house') that is central in Mengen leadership structure and vital ritual magic used for gardening, hunting, fishing, and all other important life events. Like the notion of *palang pupuna* that organizes the settlement of all spirits of the dead, the concept of an inversion, of an equally accommodative shelter-canoe design, provides a propagative analogy for the continuation of life on either plane.

In Kivung ontology the ritual of feeding the dead exemplifies the Narokobian notion of the living and the dead occupying the same temporal and horizontal plane of existence and interacting through the governing mechanism of memory and an invisible life-force (1989: 8-9). The Kivung proffer a similar concept that the spirit of a person who has died or *kirap* does not 'rise' per se but continues to exist in the same physical space as the living albeit invisibly. Some describe the spirits as existing underground, but this is more a communicative style influenced by the fact that corpses are now buried two meters underground. Traditionally, the Baining, Sulka and Mengen did not bury their dead, leaving their corpses at the base of trees in the forest.

Hence, when a person dies there is a lateral transference of energy in which the spirit takes its place in the spiritual world on the same temporal plane.

In the Narokobian cosmic view of Melanesia, the living occupy a time-space continuum that is not incommensurate to that of the spirits. Dialogue and social relations between the two are possible through certain rituals and the semiotics of the natural environment (1989: 18-20). There is no barrier separating living persons and the spirits of the dead and interactions between the two are ongoing and essential for human development, legal systems, social structures, and the overall development of a community.

The same is true in Kivung ideology but there remains a cleavage preventing universal equality. All spirits of the dead, including the ghosts of war, remain moored to Marana and the Kivung joint venture of establishing the Wan-Wol Gavman. Not until the 'cement' barrier is broken can they permanently settle their own *palang pupunas*.

Chapter 3 – On the Bones of the Living-Dead

Pile them, pile them
Drag them along
They commune in one realm
And chant their own song

They were killed in the *isoro*
A tribal raid
For them, no tomorrow
Though existence doesn't fade

One or two places,
Bury them to the side
Hide their faces
They have died

Many years later
Kiawa itoro
Number of dead greater
In the whiteman's war

On top of each other
Bone on top of bone
Forever together
They are not alone

Diroga, *asisi*, *sovai*

Spirits, them all

Some loud, some shy

All of them we call

Oro, *Oro*, *Oro*

Welcome to this place

Of happiness and sorrow

In fates' embrace

Place of wars

Peaceful place

Of unseen doors

To an unseen space

A place of life

And of death

Life after life

In the aftermath

- Gregory Bablis, Gorari Hu, August 2022

The opening stanzas of my prefatory poem elegiacally showcases the historical compounding of different episodes and scales of war on the landscape and environment. The first two lines convey the peoples outmoded practice of placing the corpses of enemies in one place, then alluding in lines three and four that the spirits of the slain occupy an unseen realm while their decaying corpses occupy the same physical patch of land. Stanza six names some of the known forms that these spirits take in this part of Oro Province. Other sections of this chapter will identify the forms that spirits of the dead in Gorari take with particular interest in the forms that the ghosts of the foreign war dead take in relation to the living and to local spirits.

The final stanzas oscillate between a dualistic nature of the conflict landscape ending in a somber yet sanguine tenor extolling that life ultimately transcends death. It is in this historical landscape of generalised violence and mass displacement that the people today perceive the

presence of grievous ghosts of war (cf. Malarney 2002: 179-80 referenced in Kwon 2008: 15). The destruction of war constitutes the backdrop of what archaeologists call 'the contemporary past'[20] for the phenomenon of war ghosts. The heterogeneous ghosts of war do not constitute a 'collective phantom' and are not merely an allegorical device for historical analogy, invoked to deliver the meaning of a new historical event against the similar or contrasting background of a familiar old one (Kwon 2008: 15-6). On the contrary, Kwon (2008) suggests that post-conflict politics and the material condition of displacement in violent death provide the historical background for the social vitality of ghosts.

Ghosts in the post-war context of Vietnam are imagined to be highly mobile actors in contrast to the deities and ancestors who are usually static, located beings. The misery of being a ghost, Kwon notes, is in fact all about not having a specified place to relate to; a place where their historical identities are remembered, and their grievances consoled (2008: 152). The condition signifies a perpetual liminal existence (van Gennep 1960: 164-5) or an external state of exclusion from society (Hertz 1960: 86). In Simmel's terminology, this belongs to the social form of 'the stranger' – who is physically close to, while at the same time, relationally far from the locale (1971: 143-8). Ghosts, Durkheim posits, are not true spirits, have limited power, no definite function in relation to the living and remain on the peripheries of society and of social phenomena (2001: 204). Ghosts become strangers to the community of the living by being outsiders to the community's realm of 'true spirits'[21] (Kwon 2008: 152).

This chapter will consider the contemporaneous relationships between the living and the dead in the post-war contexts of my fieldsites. As with Kwon's ethnography, I will explore ghosts as vital sources of historical evidence (and cultural witnesses) of war-caused violent death and displacement of human lives, on the one hand, and in view of the active social engagement in Oro and East New Britain provinces with this particular form of historical testimony on the other (cf. Kwon 2008: 5). If the war dead, their physical remains and ghosts, are a testament of WWII, so too are the social displacements and physical destructions on the environment and on the bodies of the living. By taking an earnest interest in the accounts of ghost stories, of the eerie and unsettling experiences of apparitions in my fieldsites, this chapter will show the 'place' of these categorical 'outsiders' or 'strangers' in local cosmologies. The ethnographic voices presented herein will intimate existing and novel elements of socio-religious life. Taking these seriously as natural phenomena rather than a symbolic category, the chapter will show how the ghosts of WWII have been assimilated into what Narokobi calls the 'socio-geographic' space of the living and 'psycho-geographic' dwellings of spirits (1989: 72).

In the Melanesian context there is the idea of the living-living and the living-dead viz ancestors who occupy the 'spiritual/non-empirical world' according to Ferea (2001: 5). Ferea states that the terms 'living-living' and 'living-dead' can be found in Lacey's *A Glimpse of the*

[20] Kwon notes that the term 'contemporary past' is borrowed from Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas (ed.) *Archaeologis of the contemporary past* 2001: 8-9.

[21] See also Narokobi's (1989: 68-9) *Lo Bilong Yumi Yet: Law and Custom in Melanesia* for discussion on strangers and the potential of strangers to be spirits in the Arapesh context.

Enga World-View: Some Thoughts From a Wandering Historian (1972). 'I first cited the use of these terms by this Australian historian while doing an assignment for Prof B. Narokobi in the course Melanesian Philosophy in 1981' (pers. comm. 2020). Narokobi later writes that,

> This cosmic view also accepts the reality of nature within the same timeframe and time horizon. Living creatures, both animate and inanimate, are endowed with life or living power which is capable of social relations and human dialogue with the living (1989: 8).

The Melanesian cosmic view accepts the unity of the living with the dead on the same horizontal plane. Ferea describes a similar relationship between the living-living and the living-dead that sustains harmony and coexistence in six areas of life (2001: 7). The first purpose is to cultivate food to eat; to cultivate the species or reproduction; cultivation of trade; cultivate peace between people to allow political survival of the community; cultivate and further education; and lastly to cultivate a religious life that allows the community to survive spiritually (Ferea 2001: 7).

In Melanesian theology, the concepts of living-living and living-dead have developed, in similar vein to Narokobi and Ferea's descriptions. Mombi, a theologian at the Christian Leader's Training College in the Highlands Region of PNG, writes that Melanesians define 'community' as comprising both the living-dead and the living-living (2013: 84). He continues that when the living-living need help in hunting, fishing, tribal fighting, etc., the living-dead are ritually invoked to assist, and give success in these adventures. Thus, ancestors, viz the living-dead, are the source of power and strength for the living-living (Mombi 2013: 84). In African theology, the living-dead is defined as a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew the person in life as well as being alive in the world of the spirits. As long as a living-dead person continues to be remembered by those who knew them, they exist in a state of 'personal immortality' (Mbiti 1969: 25).

What the following sections will show is that in many ways the state-sanctioned collective memory of the war and the foreign war dead exist distinctively from, yet in communion with, local and personal memories and experiences of the war. By showing the spatial relations of these separate spaces of spiritual existence and ways of remembering, the chapter will demonstrate the accommodative nature of socio-religious beliefs in my fieldsites to the idea/entity of the foreign or the stranger. I will do this first by taking Kwon's cue for a radical shift to taking seriously other cosmological ideas about the living and the dead.

In the conception of the sacred, Kwon states that the negative cult of ghosts is mutually constitutive of the positive cult of ancestors and we cannot imagine the symbolic values of ancestors without placing them in a wider relational structure with those of ghosts (2008: 24). What does it mean then if we take seriously these concepts in the contexts of villages now established on former battlefield sites, and the relationships of the living-living there to the living-dead that might include the ghosts of the foreign soldiers of WWII? How are the 'foreign' living-dead in my fieldsites remembered? How are the unrecovered war dead, for whom mortuary rituals were not possible, remembered and sequestrated into the spiritual worlds of my fieldsites? That is, what is the ontological status of the ghosts of WWII in local spiritual worlds?

Section 1 – The Kaiva Cosmology

Gorari stretches over the riparian plains of the tributaries of the larger Kumusi River which empties into the sea more than sixty kilometers away. The Owen Stanley Ranges over which brutal encounters of WWII played out, silhouettes the southern skyline. Beginning its stance on the western borders of Gorari and neighbouring Oivi hamlet, the Ajura Kaiari Range rolls out in a northerly direction. Its southern ridge base directs all the smaller tributaries into the larger Divune River that adjoins the Kumusi further downstream. The tribes here come under the ethnonym Orokaiva, used by the Australian colonial administration in the late 19th century and which has stuck ever since (Williams 1930: 3; & Bashkow 2006: 29-32, for genesis of the term Orokaiva as a 'cultural designation and classification' for the people of this part of Oro Province). The people of Oivi-Gorari call themselves Kaina, speak the language of the same name and most can also speak and or understand the neighbouring Hunjara language. Keke, my host at the Gorari Hu hamlet, is fluent in both Kaina and Hunjara. He is multilingual, speaking and comprehending English, Tok Pisin and Polis Motu as well. Most people here are multilingual and the etymological origins of some of the placenames reveal historical moments of culture clashes of sorts between neighbouring tribes.

Gorari is a placename that derives from historical episodes of conflict much earlier than WWII. Keke explains to me that:

> 'Gorari' means 'to pull or drag something' 'like a skeleton or corpse' and go put it in a particular area. When our ancestors used to fight and kill each other, they would get the bones of the people they killed and come and gather them here. This area that we have settled and made our village on is where they used to gather all the bones (Translated from our Tok Pisin conversations).

To be more accurate, the term Gorari is better described as a verb meaning 'to drag along'. Gorari Village comprises the two hamlets of Gorari Hu and Gorari Kombu. Hu means 'top' and kombu means 'bottom' – physical references for where the corpses of enemies were placed. The toponyms contextualize a longer history of relationship between fighting, place, and bones around which I was investigating the spectral vestiges of the combatants of WWII – the *kiawa itoro* or whiteman's war. The corpses of those ancient interclan and intertribal clashes, between Hunjara and Kaina warriors, have long since gone. The village name and ancestral stories of how the village got its name are the only traces left of those battles of yore. Where once were only Kaina and Hunjara bones, have been replaced or immixed with a considerable number of the corpses of foreign soldiers of WWII.

What Australian military records call the Battle of Oivi-Gorari combines military engagements in and around the two named hamlets between 4 and 11 November 1942.

Battlefield features like Australian revetments, foxholes, and observation posts or Japanese trenches, fighting pits, and bomb craters can be found across the Gorari plains and up along Oivi Ridge. They now lie under bush, jungle and gardens in some places and under oil palm blocks, cocoa blocks and marshes in others. On record, the Battle of Oivi-Gorari resulted in the deaths of 133 Australian soldiers and approximately 600 Japanese soldiers (some estimates are higher). In remembrance of these war deaths, monuments and commemorative plaques were installed roadside, in front of Gorari Hu, less than a hundred meters from my house in the village.

Figure 20. Australian monuments and commemorative plaques installed at Gorari in 2018.

This was the initiative of Australian war bereaved families, veteran's associations, and trekking operators. The PNG Museum approved the initiative in early 2018 and the memorial site was completed and unveiled in November 2018. Most of the Australian war dead around Oivi-Gorari have since been reinterred at Bomana Commonwealth War Cemetery in Port Moresby while a significant number of Japanese war dead remain unrecovered. Less than 400 meters east of Gorari Hu there is a mass burial site of 280 Japanese remains. The Japanese Association of Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties (JARRWC) have been working the site intermittently since the late 1990s and have recovered only a handful of complete remains so far. A Japanese monument and commemorative plaque were installed in 2012 at Jopure Hamlet.

Figure 21. Photographs of Japanese Monument and commemorative plaque at Jopure Hamlet. The single commemorative plaque reads, 'A Fallen General from Kochi Prefecture rests here. July 2012, Kochi Prefecture Governor Masanao Ozaki. Nanhai Detachment Comrades Bereaved Family Meeting and Bereaved Family Representatives'.

In this landscape where the memory of the foreign war dead appears in sharp relief, what are the cosmological consequences and sociological implications of this admixture of unrelated corpses? Australian and Japanese commemorative practices, battlefield features, burial sites, and 'war surplus materials' create a memoryscape, to borrow a term from memory studies (Cardina 2021: 380-1), onto local geographies. The corporeal remains of the foreign war dead are part of the collective of material objects that comprise a memoryscape appropriately described by Butler (2009: 1) as a landscape interpreted and imagined using the memories of others. The infrastructure of this memoryscape are not just the corroding metallic remains and decomposing bodies of the war dead, but include the growing number of memorial spaces, commemorative plaques and other war memory projects carried out in these former battlefield sites by the PNG Government and governments of the former combatant nations. Falgout et al. discuss the ways in which collective memory or 'cultural memory' is created by and for a group, through that group's deliberate statement of the past, which can be in the form of language but also through art, landscape, commemorations and monuments. These can be used to transform personal memory into collective remembering (2008: 25). What I am suggesting is that the war-related memoryscape gets superimposed into local contexts and promotes the cultural memory of other countries alongside local spaces and practices of remembering. While Chapter One addressed the tensions between the two, this chapter discusses how they coexist.

The ‘stranger’ is an important concept in the anthropological studies of identity and ethnic relations, and, more broadly, in the tradition of existential philosophy and critical thought (Kwon 2008: 20). I use it here not just to refer to the ghosts of war but also to the introduced ways of remembering and commemorating the war dead like government, PNG and foreign, led services. Simmel, argues that the main characteristics of the stranger are mobility and diversity, and that it, as a concept, consists of the constellation of being near and remote at the same time (1971: 145). In Stasch’s similar concept of ‘social otherness’, he posits that it exists when a person experiences as different and strange not just any object, but an acting being (2009: 15). This other being is thought to have some kind of consciousness of itself and surrounding events. Social otherness foregrounds a crucial element of routine human intersubjectivity: the forms of separateness and strangeness that lie between persons who are conscious of each other’s consciousness (Stasch 2009: 15-6). On the one hand, there are local actors like Keke with his own ancestral stories and memories, and on the other, there are the ghosts of WWII whose physical remains on Keke’s land attract the memories of foreign others. The dexterous body of ritual actors like Keke is at the center of this concentric conceptual moral order consisting of settled ancestors and placeless ghosts (cf. Kwon 2008: 20).

The structure of domestic commemorative ritual, in the tradition of the central region, situates the ritual actor in between two separate modes of afterlife and milieus of memory (Kwon 2008: 20). On the one side lies the positive cult of ancestors. The other side orientates towards what Taussig calls ‘the open space of death,’ which is the imaged life-world of the tragic, non-ancestral, unsettled and unrelated spirits of the dead (1987: 7, referenced in Kwon 2008: 20-1). The ‘two separate modes of afterlife and milieus of memory’ in my post-war fieldsites consist of a local memoryscape with placenames like ‘Gorari’ and then the war-imposed memoryscape that reifies a melded name like ‘Oivi-Gorari’ with the memories of WWII and the ghosts left in its wake. Each memoryscape comes with their own historical backgrounds, infrastructures and meanings. The stranger, according to Simmel, is fixed within a certain spatial circle – or within a group whose boundaries are analogous to spatial boundaries – but his position within it is fundamentally affected by the fact that he does not belong in it initially and that he brings qualities into it that are not, and cannot be, indigenous to it. Still, the state of being a stranger is a completely positive relation and a specific form of interaction (1971: 143).

The spiritual world or psycho-geographic space of Gorari includes the war-related memoryscape which is sustained by the growing popularity of dark tourism or thanatourism that involves journeys to sites of death (cf. Harrison 2012: 6). Thus ‘the stranger’, though relationally distant, continues to maintain physical and psychological proximity to the local. Oro and East New Britain provinces are particularly popular locations for this war tourism industry. I lived in Gorari Hu for six months and war surplus materials are a striking visible feature of the Oivi-Gorari battlefield area. Corroded gun parts, expended ammunitions, soldier’s shoe heels, and horseshoes are just some of the war surplus materials that can be found on the surface or are upturned when people dig postholes for houses or when gardening. Some people keep small collections of these war paraphernalia as odd curiosities. Items that were in reasonably good condition were given new meanings and uses. Guns were highly sought after by locals

immediately after the war and these were used for hunting or for interclan and intertribal conflicts. In Ufutumu Hamlet, neighbouring Gorari, I was once shown an odd-looking cooking pot which the owner then comically revealed was a WWII bomb-head.

Figure 22. Photographs of WWII bomb-head still being used today by Ufutumu villagers as a cooking pot.

Skeletal remains of the foreign war dead are many too, as are stories of the accidental digging up of their bones and experiences of spectral apparitions and other manifestations of the ghosts of war.

The current site of Gorari Village was settled after the war-caused displacements of 1942. Returning villagers did not know where armies had buried corpses in mass graves or where decomposing corpses laid in unmarked graves. War surplus materials and the skeletal remains of the war dead represent temporal continuities of the war in that their presence in former battlefield sites like Gorari and Tol create the ongoing need for the PNG Government to manage their movement, preservation or proper disposal or reinterment. PNG Museum legislation helps maintain the imposed memoryscape of the war firstly through its administration of the War Surplus Material Act, legislated in 1952 by the Australian colonial administration but brought under the remit of the PNG Museum in the early 1990s. The Act defines ‘war surplus materials’ as,

> Any building, fitting or structure, or the materials comprising any building, fitting or structure or any aircraft, ship, vehicle, machinery, equipment or chattel acquired or used by any government or by the armed forces of any government in, or in connection with,

> the prosecution of the recent war, and are located in the country including its internal waters and its territorial sea and the underlying lands, and includes any property of any kind including gold and other precious metals.

Proprietary rights of these war surplus materials are vested with the State which prohibits their sale or destruction. Though it does not specifically mention the skeletal remains of the foreign war dead, the PNG Museum's working policies cater for their management. As the returning colonial administration, the Australians have been recovering their soldier's remains since immediately after the war and as allies, the Americans have had the access to do so too. Japanese missions were granted permission to search and exhume the remains of their war dead, erect monuments and conduct services in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea on 25 November 1954 (Department of External Affairs 1958: 405). The PNG Museum took oversight of liaising with foreign human remains recovery missions after 1992. It continues this work with the Unrecovered War Casualties (UWC) section of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) of the US Department of Defense, and JARRWC operating under the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW). When villagers accidently upturn bones of the war dead they are at once implicated in the framework of government policies and bilateral arrangements that facilitate the work of recovery and repatriation.

The PNG Museum acts as a mediator between these foreign missions and the clans on whose lands the war dead lay unrecovered; and as a mediator between the national and local spaces of memory and commemoration. The relationship that people in these former battlefield sites have with the spirits of the war dead is important to understand as that determines how they treat skeletal remains and subsequently the foreign missions that go to recover them. More will be explained in the next chapter on the mediatory role of the PNG Government between foreign human remains missions and villagers.

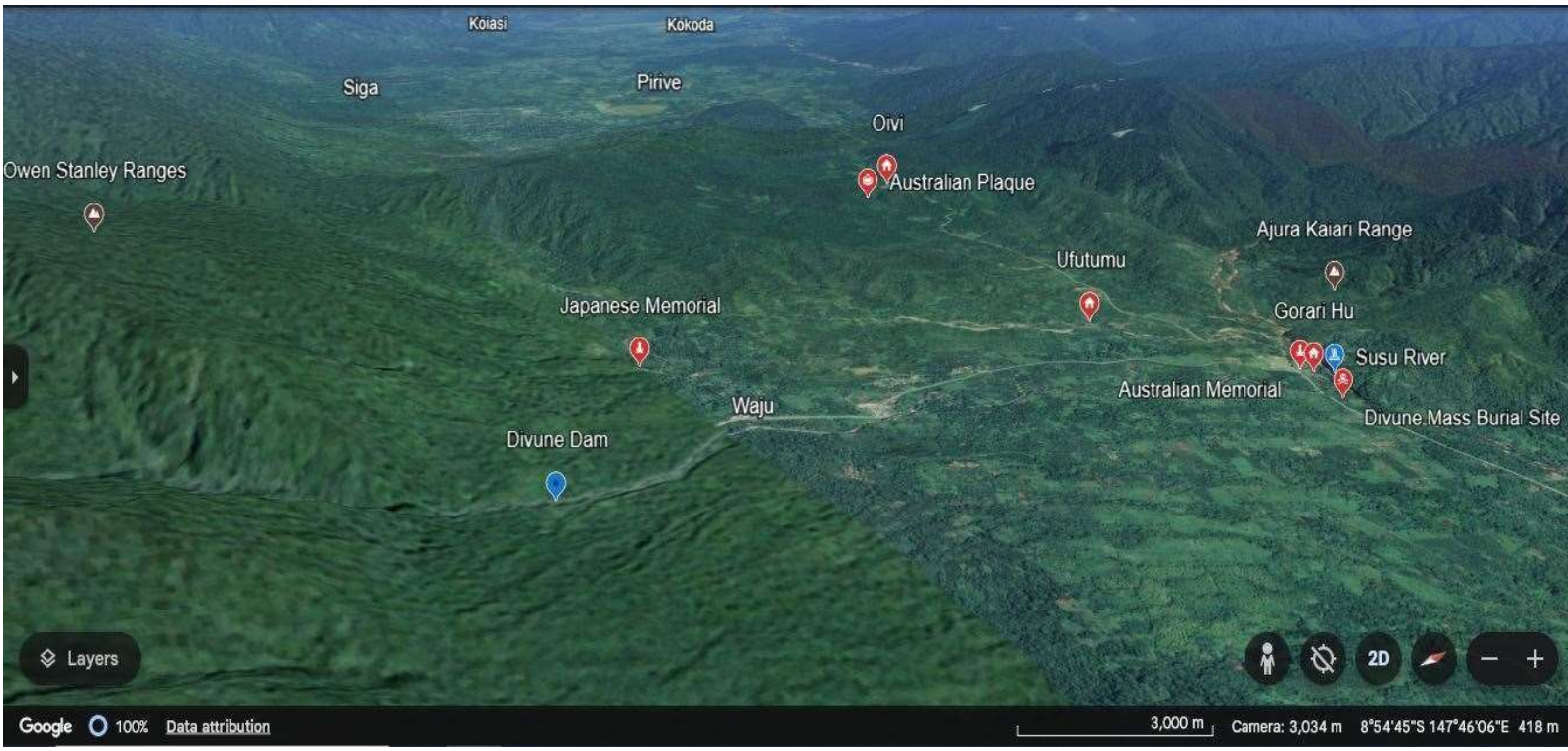


Figure 23. Map of Gorari-Waju Ward 10, facing west towards Kokoda, showing distribution of commemorative plaques and monuments. I have not included all the battlefield features. **Google Earth** image.

My principal interlocutors in Gorari Hu, apart from Edrick Keke, include Trophian Anjeka, Noel Taifa and Taylor Otira who now lives in Oivi Village but is a frequent visitor to Gorari Hu. Keke is a Community-Based Constable (CBC): a semi-trained officer in a rural-based network established to support the work of the Royal PNG Constabulary. Taifa is a longtime Peace Officer for Gorari-Waju Ward 10 and he supports the work of the CBC and the Village Magistrate. All these positions are recognized within the PNG legal system though not yet properly integrated into the official government payroll system. Anjeka is a teacher at Gorari Elementary School and is also the Ward Secretary for Ward 10. He supports the work of the Ward Member and the Ward Development Committee. Wards are the lowest level of government, under the provincial and local-level government structures, but receive very little subsidies from the national government compared to provinces and districts. Otira holds no official position within the ward and is primarily a subsistence farmer though all the men have garden blocks where they grow different types of cash crops like oil palm and buai or food for personal consumption; mainly taro, banana and *kaukau* (sweet potato in Tok Pisin).

Over the years the people of Gorari and Waju have dug up many skeletal remains, partial and full, belonging to WWII soldiers. In all the instances when skeletal remains were turned up from

the soil, they were either digging postholes for new houses or were gardening. The expansion into previously unsettled and uncultivated lands is partly because of increasing population pressure. The current inhabitants of the area are one, two, and three generations removed from the war and know from their parents and grandparents that their lands were a battlefield during WWII. This is confirmed for them every time they dig up bones and war surplus materials. For instance, between the late 1970s and the late 1990s thirty-five Japanese remains were recovered from around the Waju area (Happell 2008: 147). This was due largely to the efforts of a single Japanese war veteran named Kokichi Nishimura whom I will introduce in the next chapter. Most of the Australian remains were reinterred at Bomana Commonwealth War Cemetery soon after the end of WWII.

Digging up skeletal remains is emotively and ethically different from digging up metallic remains. There is always a compelling need for the proper or appropriate disposal of corpses (cf. Faust 2008: 61) whereas metallic remains can be more unconscionably souvenired or sold. In 1997, for instance, when Keke was digging a posthole for a new house, he unearthed three remains wrapped in black plastic. Keke reburied the remains nearby and marked the spot but not before some souvenirs were taken. Anjeka took a toothbrush, a common item that would have been a part of a soldier's kit, that had been upturned with the remains. He later sold the dirty old toothbrush for K160 (£34) to Miichin Sarigari, Nishimura's adopted son who helped him with his personal bone-collecting mission between the 1980s and the early 2000s. There is a qualitative difference in Keke's reburial of the bones as opposed to Anjeka's selling of the plastic toothbrush that indicates a value difference in utilitarian and sacrosanct aspects of the objects. Human bones are not like any other plastic or metallic war surplus materials though PNG laws and policies may categorize them under one broad working definition. Faust notes that in the corpse there remains something of the former selfhood and in terms of the Protestant doctrine, something of the future and immortal selfhood as well (2008: 62).

The Second World War was a global conflict played out at the local and village level around PNG. Decades after the end of the war when villagers find human remains and other war surplus materials, there are implications of multiple dimensions that need to be considered. Francisco Ferrándiz has pointed out that in the Spanish context, exhumed bodies continue to have the following *lives:* associative, political, media, judicial, scientific and emotional (2011: 534, emphasis original, author's translation referenced in Rubin 2015: 142). The next chapter will consider in more detail the political and judicial or legal 'lives' of exhumed corpses but here I will look into Ferrándiz's concept of the emotional 'life' of corpses or what might be called the spiritual life of corpses in the Melanesian context.

When people accidently dig up skeletal remains that they have no known relation to or knowledge of, they will have serious concerns about having 'disturbed the dead' and may be thinking about the most appropriate way of treating or managing the bones. People dealing with the foreign and unknown war dead become confronted with the wartime crisis of having to

dispose of corpses as they are brought within a broader context of assumptions about appropriate treatment of the dead (cf. Faust 2008: 61). In the above case Keke reburied and marked the grave but in the following case some of the remains were not reinterred. Taylor Otira, Keke's nephew, recounts to me the finding in Tok Pisin but which I have translate to English here,

> That time uncle Edrick wanted to build his house and he was digging holes, post holes. As he was digging he cracked the skull of a Japanese. The head of a Japanese. And he dug it up and exposed all the bones, including the head. He placed them outside and we all went to see and we agreed that we had done wrong and should put the bones back in the plastic. So all the bones, they put them into a plastic and I got them. I got the plastic to put it at my house. When I wanted to go put the bones at my house, I informed the bones (about where I was going to take it). They were just bones but I talked to them, 'You left your brother's, your family, and many years you've been in the ground so now you will go and stay with me at my house.' I said that and I put the bones at my house. I left the bones and I went to eat betel nut and smokes with some other family members. And another brother wanted to sleep at my house, in my room, and when he was there, he saw the bones and he took them out. He removed the bone and threw them to the ground. At the same time, I was chewing betel nut and smoking and these fireflies came and were disturbing me. The fireflies disturbed me and I felt something was amiss. It was the bones that I put in the house, someone must have gone and disturbed it. And from there I rushed back home and into the house. I went in and I flashed my torch to where I had put the bones but they weren't in their place. I asked the brother where he had moved them. He replied that he was scared and he put them underneath the house. Oh so it was you that made it and the thing [bone/spirit] went and disturbed me, causing me to come back to the house. So I went down and got the [bones] and I apologized to it and brought it up. I got it and I brought it up into the house again. I put it in the house and I told the brother, "If you want to sleep you don't look at this thing [bones], you close your eyes and sleep." So the bones remained. I left all the bones in the house. But I kept a false tooth, with a kind of glue, in my pocket. I carried it around with me. But then I'm not able to hunt. There is no disturbance from any spirits or anything bad when I go around but I'm not able to hunt because that thing [bone/spirit] is in my pocket so I'm not able to catch anything. It went on like this as I carried it around, and that thing [spirit/bone] also disturbed my wife. It doesn't harm her but it would do all kinds of funny things. So I removed the tooth and placed it on the post (house post). But the thing was still disturbing that woman. It [spirit/bone] wouldn't come as a firefly, it would come as a man and would do all kinds of things [tricks/apparitions] to that woman. So I went down and removed it and put it inside my pocket again. I left it there and went around. This went on for a while until it got lost. And in my dreams, it was a young fellow. A young man. He wasn't married, he had no beard – he appeared to me in dreams. Japanese. But the way he appeared, he was not angry, he was happy and was laughing when he appeared. He stayed for a long while – as I kept the bones for a long while and then they eroded away. The bones used to be in the ground for a long time and then we brought them up so they melted [eroded to ashes] so we disposed of them. That's all. The bones stayed a long

while and then they spoiled. The ones he got (referring to Edrick) must have also spoiled too.

When the remains are accidentally upturned from the soil the men are apprehensive and feel they have done something wrong. Digging up the remains of their own dead is something they would not intentionally do unless this was done inconspicuously to use the bones for sorcery and other forms of covert magic. Even so, Otira does take some of the bones but before he moves them, he talks to them as he might to an ancestor whose bones were secured for sorcery purposes. Referring to both the bones and the spirit associated with the bones, Otira uses the term *sovai*. The distinction between *sovai* and two other spiritual entities in the Kaiva spiritual world will be drawn out in the following.

Otira's intentions are sorcery-related in a way, though not malicious or inimical, because he intended to use the bones as a talisman or *was* (literally 'watch' in Tok Pisin) to safeguard himself from spiritual attacks and other malevolent magic that may be deployed against him by his enemies. The spirit associated with the bones manifests its presence to him in a number of ways common in the contexts of my fieldsites. The spirit first appears as a firefly to Otira after his relative moved the bones from inside to underneath his house. Later Otira begins carrying around in his pocket a tooth from the remains as a *was*. Keeping a *was* is common for bigmen even today, as they often express fears of threat of violence or sorcery attacks over land disputes among the different clans and their extended kin networks. But the presence of the spirit radiates from the tooth as a repelling aura that animals are also highly sensitive to and makes it impossible for him to catch anything when hunting. The spirit then appears as apparitions to Otira's wife in the form of thumping footsteps, indistinct shadowy figures that startle her when moving about the house or felt presences that make the hair on her skin stand and give her goosebumps. Lastly the spirit reveals his identity and temperament in Otira's dream showing that he means them no harm.

In Otira's story he uses the terms bone and spirit interchangeably. When he says *samting* in Tok Pisin which translates to 'thing', to refer to the fireflies disturbing him and the apparitions bothering his wife, he is at once applying it to both the bones and the Japanese spirit. The interplays between Otira and the skeletal remains appertain to the manifestations of the Japanese soldier's spirit. Human actions like the movement of the bones effectuate the responses of the spirit associated with the bones. The corporeality of bones firmly places them in the physical world while their phenomenological attachments to spirits of the dead make them temporal conduits between both worlds. The bones and ghost of the war dead, thus, given no proper burial or mortuary rites while still being given magico-religious utilities or experienced as fireflies and apparitions, waver between two worlds (cf. van Gennep 1960: 18).

In the Kaiva cosmology there are at least three terms used to refer to spirits of the dead: *sovai*[22], *asisi*[23] and *diroga*[24]. The first is clearly used to refer to the spirit of a person who has just

[22] My Kaina interlocutors use the related term *sova* or *sova vuvu* but I will use *sovai* for uniformity with the general Kaiva terms from William's 1930 work.

[23] In Kaina, *asisi* is *ahihi*.

died as well as to the various manifestations of this being, including fireflies and apparitions. *Sovai* can be used to refer to an ancestor or the collective of ancestral beings in the spiritual world. It is to the *sovai*, used singularly, or the collective *sovai* that Keke appeals to every night he goes out hunting for *mumut* (bandicoot in Tok Pisin). If he is unsuccessful in catching anything that night, it is them whom he curses and then tries to make amends with before going out hunting again the next night. In my six months in Gorari though, I rarely heard Keke complain about his *sovai* after returning from a nighttime hunt. And *mumut*, cuscus and eel were a regular part of our menu.

The term *asisi* has a very wide meaning that can overlap in use with the meanings of *sovai* but the distinction, made initially by Williams (1930: 265), is that it can also refer to the different spiritual or psychic manifestations of living beings as well. Thus, the image or likeness of a living person seen in a dream or vision or an alleged doppelgänger reportedly seen in two different places at the same time would be referred to as *asisi*. A persons' shadow and their reflection, as seen on water or in mirrors today, are also *asisi* (cf. Williams 1930: 260-287 & Bashkow 2006: 175). The term *diroga* is used specifically in the context of the *isoro* or traditional raid to refer to the spirit of a man killed in a fight in contrast to the spirit of someone who died any other way (cf. Williams 1930: 170).

Otira does not refer to the Japanese soldier's spirit as *diroga* but uses *sovai*. This probably makes sense since his ancestors were not the ones who killed the foreign soldiers in the context of an *isoro*. The *kiawa itoro* that was WWII is likely perceived here as a foreign conflict to them, fought between outside groups. The ghosts that were thus enumerated as a result of WWII were not immediately recognizable under one of their categories of spirits though they have subsequently been incorporated under one of them. Keke, Anjeka and Taifa categorize all other spiritual manifestations they experience after bones are accidentally dug up, whether fireflies or other apparitions, as *sovai*.

Keke, Anjeka and Taifa have told how during times of interclan skirmishes with the neighbouring hamlet of Waju, they would summon the spirits of the dead soldiers along with their *sovai* to help them best their rivals. The most recent incident of a major interclan skirmish where Keke has solicited the assistance of the *sovai* was in 2000. Known for their fighting in the *kiawa itoro*, the ghosts of these foreign soldiers are grouped as warriors so they are called upon as Keke might call upon the name of an ancestor who was known to be a great warrior in life. Individual names of soldiers are not known but through the many instances of upturned bones and subsequent spirit manifestations, they know that they remain attached to the places of their deaths even after their presence are no longer experienced.

In preparation for a fight, Keke makes a general appeal to the *sovai* of the all the soldiers who were killed during the *kiawa itoro* and who remain with them and their ancestors on their land. He does this by first talking with them under his breath at an individual level and making

[24] The Kaina phrase for *diroga* is *isoro embo ta ahihi* which literally translates to 'spirit or soul of a man killed in the fight'.

frequent verbal appeals to them which increase in rhythm and decibel levels. This crescendos in war chants to excite the other men gathered around as they begin to march on the warpath. He explains that when the *sovai* join them to fight, their warband can be numerically small but will have the appearance and sound of basically a small army that will scare off their enemies who scatter and run away. Their enemies will flee because they know from past experiences that they have suffered heavy losses when Keke's group have sought the help of the *sovai*. The ghosts or spirits of foreign soldiers in this context serve a functional purpose and are treated as *sovai* putting them in the realm of ancestors.

Asisi and *sovai* are the most common beings in the Kaiva spiritual world. The former is distinguished from the latter in that it is also used to refer to the spirit of the living – of humans, animals and even plants. According to Williams, *asisi* can be used synonymously with the concept of the term 'soul' and is the term used in the Kaiva translation of the Bible. *Asisi* is distinguished from a *sovai* which is the being that a living person is believed to literally transform into upon death, regardless of the physical state of the corpse (Williams 1930: 267). However, with the ghosts of war, I suggest that there is a period of unmoored enigmatic existence until the living-living find a function for them. Taifa gives his explanation of the spiritual beings associated with the living and the dead. I provide it here in English,

> Good spirits are in us when we are alive. The spirit that controls us, our helper, is the good spirit. Okay, when we die that spirit goes to the side. I think that that good spirit goes to the side and waits for us on the judgement day. But when we are sleeping in the ground (when we are dead), in the grave, there is another spirit that looks after or stays with the dead (with the bones). And that is not a good spirit. Shadows of death. That is the bad spirit [that is with the bones], so I think that answers you. So it is that person (bad spirit contained in the bones) that is used to do this kind of work (sorcery).

This is Taifa's response when I asked him why bones are used for performing sorcery. He equates *asisi* with soul which is incorruptible and 'goes to the side' to await final judgement while the *sovai* is the being that maintains corporeal connections to skeletal remains as well as the physical environment.

What is clear is the ability of the *sovai* to communicate with the living-living through their various physical/spiritual manifestations and the ability of the living-living to speak to them as Keke and other men do when hunting or when seeking their help to fight. People seek the assistance and blessing of their *sovai* in many aspects of their lives including fishing, gardening and today more frequently when panning for gold. Daisy Akena, Keke's niece, explains next in Tok Pisin, which I translate here, that,

> If you pray to your god, your ancestor, your ancestor will give you meat (hunting game) now. You say, 'Grandfather set a cuscus for me', and he will place a cuscus for you where you will go with your dog and you will kill it and come back. You might go and, say you want to plant taro and your ancestor will give you a big taro. You will harvest. Now you might be worrying about a few things and you say, 'Grandfather, things are like this', and you pray to your own god [meaning your ancestors] they will give it. And this god

> [referring to the Christian God] that we are now worshipping is a waste of time. We are wasting our time when we say that, 'The judgement day will come and the hour will come', but it is not like that at all for we have set our times already. Whether you did right or wrong, you have made the decision in the present. If I did wrong and died, where would I go? God has already separated death and life. That's all.

Akena equates ancestor, and the collective ancestors, with God insofar as talking with them, asking things from them or asking their blessings and assistance with life's activities and tribulations are traditionally what they did. These moments of contemplation and personal conversation with an ancestor or ancestors are like prayers to God or his intercessors in the Christian context. Akena's statements here are noteworthy too as it speaks to a Kaiva concept of time where the past and the present are more accessible and important than a future that can only be shaped by the past and the present.

According to Mbiti, procreation extends the length of 'personal immortality' for the living-dead as sustained through generational memory (1969: 25). With the passing of time, the living-dead sink beyond the horizon of the Sasa period – a Swahili term that refers to present or current times and covers the recent past as well as the constantly shaping future. Beyond the Sasa period is the Zamani period which is when the last of the living-living relatives has passed on and a person is no longer remembered by name. However, the living-dead do not vanish out of existence but enter a state of 'collective immortality' when they are no longer formal members of the human families but can still be appealed to (Mbiti 1969: 26-7). This is comparable to the Sabarl spirit forms where a named ancestor, *tubu*, stands in contrast to both the baloma (idealized memory, liberated from the ongoing concerns of human beings) and the *piwapiwa* (unmoored memory, undisciplined, in disarray), as a being still tied to the living through material objects and remains, names, commemorative songs and tales, and other 'marks' or 'memory' (Battaglia 1990: 70).

Writing of the Austronesian concept of time and the importance of the past, Hau'ofa states that, 'The past is alive in us, so in more than a metaphorical sense the dead are alive – we are our history' (2000: 460). Akena and Keke's ancestors are alive in the present, not yet beyond the horizon of the realm of the unremembered/unnamed and so are actively providing for them and shaping their future as a constantly forming present. In this milieu of memory though, while he might remember the names of his own ancestors as he calls them for help in hunting, he may still call upon the general population of *sovai* including the unnamed Japanese living-dead abiding in collective immortality for help in his interclan fighting.

Section 2 – The Sulka Spiritual World

Tol Government Station sits on a border highly contested between the Baining and Sulka tribes. It has developed around what was formerly an Australian coconut plantation. When an Australian man and his wife, known only in archival records and Baining oral histories as Master

Ross and Mrs Ross, purchased the land in the early 1900s, the payments were made to Baining bigmen. The record of that transaction has been what Bainings today have used to continue to lay claim to government royalties for the use of the land over which Tol Government Station is now located. Tensions over their tribal borders continue but the situation being what it is, the Sulka's were given settler status at Tol and live in the settler villages of Koki and Gumgum. These two villages are spread out between the logging operations at Masarau[25] and the local high school named after the Australian 2/22 Battalion whose soldiers were massacred in the area during WWII.

As with my Gorari fieldsite, the imposed war-related memoryscape appears in sharp contrast in the socio-geographic terrain of Tol. In the one year I spent in the Wide Bay area, I mapped this geography of WWII battlefield features as I went about collecting ghost stories of people across the six kilometre stretch of coastline along which Australian soldiers were massacred by Japanese Forces on 4 February 1942. The map below shows some of the war features around Tol.

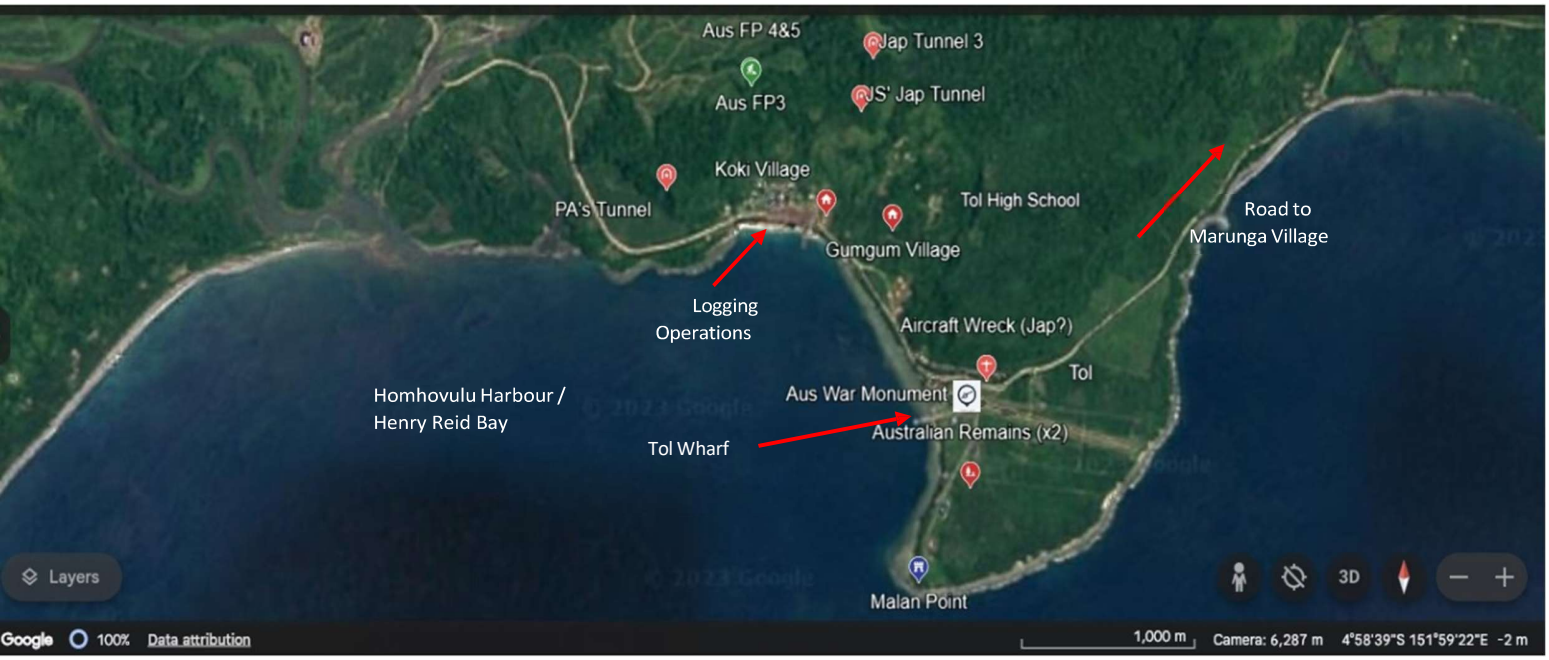


Figure 24. Overview of Tol Station. **Google Earth** image.

The Australian temporary cemetery in 1945 was at Koki Village, seen west of Gumgum Village and the high school. An Australian memorial cairn is located east of the wharf. And southeast from the wharf, my interlocutors and I recovered two Australian remains in 2021. I have included on the map above just a few of the battlefield features, like Australian fighting pits and Japanese tunnels, because the features and material remains I plotted with my GPS device

[25] My Baining interlocutors tell me that the origin of the placename Masarau comes from their elder's pronunciation of the Australian planter's name 'Master Ross'.

are too numerous to fit into a small map.

Over the years people around Tol have turned up skeletal remains when gardening or digging postholes for houses. Ephraim Kavon and his wife, Sona, have told me of many instances of skeletal remains being exposed unintentionally during various stages of development in Tol. Informants have told me that many bones were dug up or destroyed by excavators when roads were graded and buildings constructed. Locals witnessed bones being unearthed and crudely reburied roadside in 2007-2008 when graders were widening the access road from Masarau and installing the logging company's fuel tanks near Koki Village. The area from the fuel tanks to Koki Village is the site of the temporary Australian war cemetery in 1945. The UWC-ADF have had more recent missions to visit this area since the 1980s to pay their respects and to attend to reports of skeletal remains.

A few of my informants tell me that they believe some of the bones in this area to be Japanese since they were based there before the Australians. Both my Baining and Sulka informants have stated that some bones may even be of local people because their parents told them of the Japanese executing a few of their people who were imprisoned there between 1942 and 1943. Fidelma Lemka's story of her grandmother, Veronica Tēchērnam's eyewitness account of one of these executions indicates that at least one Baining man was buried around the area after being beheaded (Tayul & Stebbins 2004: 40-2). Locals saw scattered skeletal remains in the grader's bucket when an access road from the airstrip down to Malan Point was being cleared in 2012. When water pipes were being lain around the same time down to Malan Point, many bones were dug up and then placed back in the drains under the water pipes.[26] What does this mean for the bones and the ghosts that are associated with them? Where do these ghosts 'reside' and where do they go if bones are destroyed?

The next ethnographic voice is from present day Koki Village. Here some of the 160 Australian soldiers that were massacred between Koki Village and Malan Point (refer to map above) were buried temporarily by their Army before being reinterred at the Bita Paka Commonwealth War Grave in Rabaul.

[26] In the most recent instance, Kavon's kids found skeletal remains along the abandoned Tol airstrip on 20 October 2023 while playing.

Figure 25. This photograph, dated 1 August 1945, shows natives and soldiers of the 2/22nd Infantry Battalion working in Tol Cemetery. The Sulka settler village of Koki is now situated over this area. (Photo reference: https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C71184).

John Samo, a Sulka informant of mine, tells me in Tok Pisin, translated to English here, that, 'They', referring to the Australians, 'may have taken some bodies but they did not take the spirits of those dead bodies along with them or there are still some bodies (or parts of bodies), and their spirits are still left here'. He says this because on many nights he can hear the footsteps and marching of soldiers. On some occasions he would see very clearly a human figure in the distance which would disappear as he approached. Sometimes the soldiers' spirits looked to be wearing a helmet and carrying a bag. He reports also hearing the cocking and firing of guns especially at night and when alone. Such apparitions are particularly frequent in this area between Koki, Gumgum, and Tol St Paul's 2/22 Battalion High School as is its full name.

Samo tells me that when he was building his house and digging postholes, he unearthed a complete lower jawbone with all teeth still intact. He put the jawbone in one of the postholes and placed a house post over it. Later, he would see a green firefly hovering over the spot on most nights which he says is the spirit of the Australian soldier whose jawbone he had reburied under

his house post. Samo explains in Tok Pisin, which I translate here, that:

> Because they say that if a person dies at a certain place that person's spirit also remains there. That is our traditional belief. I think in the belief of the Catholic Church, it says that wherever they place you (your corpse), is your house now. If they move you out, like your bones, that is just your bones they are moving out. But the skin and the meat rotted away in the place where your corpse was placed. That means that your spirit will also remain in that place. That is like your house, in the Catholic faith it says that there are rooms in heaven but that room is actually referring to this earth. When they bury you at a certain place, that becomes your room. And even if they move the bones, it is just for nothing as your room has already been established. Your spirit will still remain at the place.

Samo posits in his explanation that spirits of the dead will continue to inhabit the same area where they passed away or were buried. According to him, other parts of the human anatomy like skin and bodily tissue or the 'meat' as he puts it, can also contain or have an associative link with the spirit of the deceased. So even if skeletal remains are later moved, a person's spirit also gets imprinted or attached to the initial burial site where the corpse has undergone some amount of natural decomposition. Kwon for instance notes this theory of 'enduring attachment' to the place of their death even if their bodies have been moved elsewhere. He describes the place of death as 'the place of origin (of life or afterlife)' (Kwon 2006: 86). In a sense, the place of death becomes like a birthplace into a new life, the life afterlife. The spirit of the dead may move to another place and linger there but ultimately returns to the persons place of death – the spirits place of birth.

A strong phenomenological connection exists between bones, and other bodily matter or substances, and the continuation of life after life. This concept is common for instance in ideas and practices connecting bodily matter and fertility in gardening. The process of *papaiting* and fertilizing the taro among the Mengen shows as much. The Mengen are a tribe that are linguistically and culturally more closely related to the Sulka than the Baining are. Their northern clans, the Nambatu Mengen, border the Sulka near Wide Bay.

Nutu Kaimuna is a traditional site on Marana Plateau (refer to chap. 2) where taro was still being planted in large quantities up until the 1970s. Beside the site, not fifty meters away, the people maintained what they called a *sasavang* – described by Noel Botaprea, my Mengen interlocutor, as a '*banis blong ston na purpur blo taro*' or 'fenced area to keep the stone and *purpur* for taro'. A Tok Pisin term, *purpur* refers to the magical qualities of the *gorgor* which is a wild ginger plant species used a lot for *papait* by many different tribes. The *sasavang* is a small circular fenced area the size of a small pig pen. The fencing is constructed in similar fashion to the way the people made their garden fences to keep out pigs.

In the *sasavang* is where the people hid *ragau girea*, *bun blo daiman* in Tok Pisin or 'bones of the dead'. Whenever someone killed another person in a tribal fight, they would dispose of the corpse in the *sasavang*. Corpses would be allowed to decompose until just the bones remained. Within the *sasavang* they planted the *gorgor* to be used to *papait* taro with and under these they

hid the *marangona* or special taro stone. When it was time to transplant the taro suckers at Nutu Kaimuna, the *gorgor* was used to *papait* the suckers before planting them. Once all the taro suckers were transplanted the *gorgor* stems would be planted around the garden and the *marangona* would also be buried, orienting its mushroom head to be left exposed above ground. *Marangona* enchanted and empowered the transplanted taro suckers, fertilizing them and encouraging their growth.

Figure 26. *Marangona*, special taro stone given by Nutu to be used to fertilize or *papait* taro with. I collected this one from Ragalona, a Mamusi village, but the stones used at Manginun would be the same though they have different names in Mengen.

Figure 27. Site of old *sasavang* on Marana Plateau near Nutu Kaimuna. The area is now overgrown by bush and the *gorgor* plants seen clearly on the right foreground.

The day Botaprea showed me Nutu Kaimuna, we stopped at the site of their old *sasavang*. Botaprea tells me that over the years, while people were gardening, many bones have been dug up, scattered, and destroyed. We took a break on the side of the garden track while he looked for some of the taro stones he last saw in the bush but he could not find any of them. He tells me various clan members are likely holding onto the stones for safe keeping since they are no longer in use. Botaprea explains that the soil around the *sasavang* is very rich given that it has been fertilized by the *gris* (grease in Tok Pisin) of the corpses kept there over many years gone by. More so than the bones, here the *gris* or 'meat' in Samo's words, of the *ragau girea* are being used to *papait* and fertilize the taro. In the same way sorcerer's use bones for their magical or spiritual powers, *ragau girea* was used in this Mengen context to *givim strong* (giving the strength or power in Tok Pisin) to the *purpur/gorgor* and the *marangona* which were then used to *papait* and fertilize taro suckers and taro gardens like Nutu Kaimuna (cf. Bashkow 2006: 173-8, concept of 'rootedness' and connection between a baby's growth, taro planting ritual in gardens and ancestral spirits in the Orokaiva context; and Battaglia 1990: 95-7 on gardening yam and the *muho* ritual and how explicitly it articulates the logic of recycling masculine energy through the agents of death back into human growth cycles on Sabarl Island).

Kwon's example of the ghost of an American officer in Vietnam also shows the attachment of spirits to bones and their burial site or the final disposition of the corpse. In this case a retired Vietnamese lieutenant told Kwon of an incident when he was in charge of a small army unit camped along the route from Cam Re to Da Nang. His men were in a state of panic after

reporting a number of incidents concerning the apparition of a foreign soldier – the American soldier. His men kindled incense sticks on the alleged spot of the apparition which angered the lieutenant who thought them to be ill-disciplined. He ordered them to remove the incense sticks and in a show of defiance he urinated on the spot of the apparition as his men watched. The dramatic gesture had its effect and the ghost of the foreign soldier disappeared but a few months later the Vietnamese lieutenant began to suffer severe migraines. From there his health quickly deteriorated and he only recovered after being treated by a ritual specialist who advised him that the foreign ghost had been outraged with him for his insensitive actions. On the advice of the ritual specialist the retired officer exhumed the corpse around the place he had urinated on. He found a skull with a bullet hole in it and the identification of an American officer. After long and complex negotiations, he had the remains returned to the US and only after that did he make a complete recovery from the health and mental issues that he was experiencing (Kwon 2008: 39-40).

Returning to the Sulka context I reintroduce Jacob Geso whose first-hand accounts of WWII feature in the Mit in a Sanwitch section of Chapter 1. I travelled to his village of Milim by boat on 25 May 2021. It was rainy season around Wide Bay and the mango trees were bearing large numbers of fruits. Many villagers around Wide Bay brought their mango surpluses to the larger markets at Tol Government Station. Around midday I hopped on one of the returning boats from Milim for the boat ride that usually takes forty-five minutes to an hour, or more if many stops were made along the way. There was a drizzle and though the sea was not on its worst behaviour the waves heaved up and down enough for some of the less experienced sea travellers to wish they had not chosen to travel that day. It was still raining when I arrived at Milim mid-afternoon. The crashing waves meant those of us disembarking had to wade in a few meters from the shore in the short lulls of the impatient tidal surges. The villages on this side of the bay are well-known for their thin coastlines and smoothly-rounded black-pebbled beaches. I quickly found Geso's house less than five minutes from where I got off the boat. He had been expecting me so ushered me under his high-post house and offered me a basket of mangoes to eat as we began talking.

Geso is a powerful sorcerer who became a practitioner at a young age during WWII. I went to speak with him on the recommendation of Kavon and Samo who both told me he would be someone with intimate knowledge of the Sulka spiritual world. I wanted to dig deeper into this idea of the attachment of spirits to bones considering Samo's explanations. The many reports of upturned bones and Samo's explanations of the attachment of spirits to bones and other bodily substances would indicate that there are many ghosts of WWII inhabiting the psycho-geographic world of Tol.

Geso tells me that during the war he witnessed his two uncles, Mangil and Toura, use *papait* to protect themselves. Mangil and Toura were the Luluai and Tultul for their village before the war and led their people into hiding when the fighting came their way. These two men's *papait* derived its power from the ashes of ancestral bones used to make the powdery

substance. They used their *pawa*[27] to keep their people safe from detection by overflying aircrafts and from the gunfire of soldiers on the ground. Geso recounted an incident during the war when Mangil and Toura were captured by Japanese soldiers and put in front of a firing squad. The two men used their defensive or protective magic, known in Tok Pisin as *babat*[28], to render the soldiers' guns invalid. In Geso's story, the soldiers rechecked their guns a few times and attempted firing again but most of the weapons still did not fire. Mangil and Toura were unscathed by the bullets of the guns that did fire. Sensing that these two men were powerful and probably useful to them, the Japanese soldiers enlisted them instead of trying to kill them. Geso's two uncles had passed on the knowledge of their *papait* to him so that he could protect himself and his relatives as they remained in hiding. He has memorized these incantations and magical procedures that involve the use of various *diwais*.[29] Geso's powers allow him to travel in between the physical world and the spiritual world and he also has the ability to see spirits and communicate with them.

According to Geso, when a person dies and is buried, their grave becomes the base from which a ladder extends into the underground. The spirit climbs this ladder from their earthly grave and into their eternal house in the underground or *ples daun*.[30] A person's grave becomes the physical location from which their underground or spiritual house is symmetrically and inversely connected. In the world of the living-living then the grave or the site where human remains lie buried is always associated with the person or the memory of the deceased person.

The underground or spiritual world is like an inverse or upside-down version of the physical world connected at certain points including the graves of the dead. Having been informed prior by Kavon and others of Geso's visit to Tol ples daun in 2018, I ask him to describe it to me, to which he replies in Tok Pisin that,

> Tol ples daun em bikpla siti wantaim ol gutpla haus na ol bikpla bildin. Rot blo ol tu i winim ol rot blo yumi. Na ol haus blo ol daiman pulap.
>
> Underground Tol is a big city with good houses and tall buildings. Their roads are far better than ours. And there are many spirit houses of the dead.

When I asked Geso if he saw the spirits of Australian, or Japanese soldiers who were killed in Tol during WWII he responded matter-of-factly that,

> 'Pulap. Ol i stap. Mi lukim ol wokabut raun stap.
>
> It's full of them. They are there/here. I saw them walking around.

Geso tells me that he saw the *nunu* (Sulka term for spirit) of many Australian soldiers in Tol *ples daun*. I asked him further about the language these ghosts of the foreign war dead speak and whether they can communicate with other *nunu*, to which he explains that they can understand all the local languages including Sulka, Baining and Mengen. *Nunu* have the ability to access any

[27] Power in English but is the term Geso uses most often to refer to the *papait*.
[28] *Babat* can be used both as a noun and a verb. Like the term papait, it is a Kuanua loanword to Tok Pisin.

[29] Tok Pisin term that Geso uses to refer to grass, plants, trees or the leaves of these.

[30] *Ples daun* translates to 'place down' and is the Tok Pisin term Geso uses to refer to the underground or spiritual world.

language of the world so the ghosts of WWII can understand the language of local spirits while local spirits can understand Japanese or any other language. Geso says that there is no fire inferno and that heaven exists in the same underground. Good spirits or those who have died a good death have an eternal house in the *ples daun* while bad spirits or those who have died a bad death wander around without an eternal house. With regards the ghosts of WWII, there are two possibilities: that they are tethered through their graves to their places of death or burial sites around Tol or their ghosts remain as displaced figures but still wandering around within the limits of the underground of where they were killed.

Geso is a Catholic but it was only in 2018 that he says a miniature statue of the Virgin Mary materialized in his basket.

Figure 28. Photograph of Geso holding the miniature statue of the Virgin Mary that materialized in his basket in 2018.

He tells me that the Virgin Mary also appeared to him in a vision and gave him instructions about what *diwai* to use for his new *pawa*. After this time, he began sourcing the *pawa* for his *papait* exclusively from God and discontinued the use of bones for this purpose. Most descriptions of traditional magic, and especially malevolent black magic, are that it is incontrollable and 'igat kik bek blong em' (has its kickbacks) which can work against its wielder to make them sick or even cause death. A practitioner has certain incantations and *babat* to 'wash' their bodies, often literally, and safeguard themselves from such dangerous kickbacks. Geso, like other practitioners of benign magic, has the ability to use his *papait* to kill, maim or make people sick but says he chooses not to because he does not want to be accused of being a *posinman* (poison man) or *sanguma* (Tok Pisin term that refers to a traditional practitioner of malevolent black magic). He also distances himself a bit from his two uncles who passed on

their *papait* to him, quipping with a laugh that 'satan pulap long ol (they are filled with satan)'. Geso says he would never use his *pawa* to kill people. The only time he might need to harm another person is if his village was ever involved in a big fight and he needed to protect his people but says with concern that this would result in the deaths of many people on the enemy side which he rues.

Geso's new power source suggests two things. First is a disconnection from his own ancestral dead and a new connection to the spirits of saints and other Christian intermediaries like the Virgin Mary. What I think is more likely the case though is that these Christian spirits are being incorporated into Geso's ancestral realm or spiritual world. The accommodative nature of socio-religious beliefs allows that introduced Christian spirits as well as the ghosts of WWII are either given new categories or are assimilated under existing categories of known forms of spirits.

A very powerful sorcerer, Geso can enter and then leave the spiritual world in real-time by which I mean that there is very little loss of time between when he enters into and then returns from the spiritual world. Time flows on continuously and normally for him when he goes to the *ples daun* as someone travelling locally within the same time zone. In the *ples daun*, Geso and other spirits can cover great distances in a short amount of time. This is a similar feature of some papaits that give their users the ability to cover long walking distances in a short amount of time. This makes it feel as if time is being compressed when in fact spatial distances are being compressed while time flows on at its usual pace. The way Geso travels into the *ples daun* is similar to his procedure for receiving his visions to look for lost or stolen property or to trace a persons' previous movements to find out the cause of an illness. He 'sleeps' or lays awake with his eyes closed using a certain *diwai* as a pillow to rest his head on. His spirit detaches from his body and goes underground while his physical body lies in wake. He sees this movement and everything that happens while he is in this 'woken-sleep' state like he sees one of his visions, 'Lo skrin o TV (on the screen or TV)', as he describes it.

In 2018 Geso went to Tol and stayed with Kavon who is a *tambu* (in-law) to him.[31] He stayed with them for a few weeks and slept in one of their *hauswins* (literally wind house in Tok Pisin or rest house). As usual Geso had regular visits from people living around Tol seeking him out to heal various ailments. One of his patients was a young Sulka woman who was pregnant and ill at the same time. Geso went into the bush on the mountain behind Tol clinic to look for the right *diwai* to use to treat her. A small creek flows from an aquifer seeping out at the base of this mountain. The small creek is called Sibinai after its resident female *masalai* or bush spirit in Tok Pisin. *Koot* is the Sulka term for *masalai* or bush spirits – also described in Tok Pisin as 'strong blong graun' (strength of the ground or land). *Masalai* can also be referred to as *wasman* in Tok Pisin, literally 'watch man' in English. The Tok Pisin terms of *wasman* and *strong blo graun* point to the *masalai's* functions as guardians of different places or environmental features. They inhabit and guard different parts of the environment and landscapes like mountains, certain sections of forests, rivers, creeks, reefs, lagoons, and so on. Geso explains that there are very many *koot* identities that inhabit and watch over different places. Many environmental features

[31] Kavons' wife, Sona, is a classificatory *pupu* (grandchild) of Geso's so he addresses Kavon as *tambu*.

and places get their names from the *masalais* that inhibit them as with Sibinai Creek. *Masalai* are genius loci 'spirit of the place' or 'true spirits' in Durkheimian terms (Kwon 2008: 24) and are thus distinguishable from ancestral spirits.

Continuing his story, Geso says that while he was looking around atop the mountain for the *diwai* to *papait* and treat the young mother-to-be, the *masalais* 'i smelim em (smelled him)' and followed him back home. Their 'strong' or *pawa* caused him to fall asleep early in the evening. There were three *masalais* that had pursued him – two female *masalai* one of which was Sibinai. He did not know the name of the second female *masalai* but the third *masalai* was male and is named Malan. He is the resident *masalai* at the coral lagoon named after him and which the Germans called Zungen or Tongue Point. Malan appeared to Geso in the form of a large *moran* (snake in Tok Pisin) while the two female *masalai* were in human form. Malan can also take the form of an old man. Geso describes Sibinai and her *masalai* companion as young beautiful native[32] women with long hair and tight breasts. Normally when Geso goes into his woken-sleep state it is of his own volition and *pawa* but this time his travel to the *ples daun* was induced by the three *masalais* who likely wanted to keep him in their realm. This is what happens when people say in Tok Pisin that 'masalai i stilim tewel blo em (masalai has stolen his or her spirit)' when someone has passed through a sacred place or offended a *masalai* by littering or defecating there for instance. When this happens a *glasman*[33] or sorcerer like Geso must be sought out to *papait* the victim and bring back their spirit.

When a *masalai* abducts someone's spirit the person falls ill and can even die. In Geso's case however, the three *masalais* tell him that they feared him because of his strong *pawa*. They were in a red Toyota Landcruiser ten-seater vehicle and invited Geso to join them for a drive.

As mentioned already, the *ples daun* version of Tol is a well-developed city with high-rise buildings and tarmac roads. Geso says that the whole of PNG has an underground geography for the living- dead. In the underground geography of PNG, Geso and the *masalais* drove from Tol to Port Moresby and other provincial towns like Lae and Mt Hagen which are on mainland New Guinea. During the trip Geso says he was conscious about minimizing his interactions with them fearing that anything they say or give to him might be a ploy to keep him in the *ples daun* forever. They had lunch at some point but he did not eat any food they offered. He drank only water while his three companions ate and praised Geso for his *pawa*. They shared buai amongst themselves afterwards but Geso told them that he does not chew buai when they offered some to him. This was a lie because he is really an avid buai chewer which is also an important part of his sorcery skillset. Driving back to Tol, Geso says that the three *masalais* gave him a large apple the size of a kettle that had a removable lid like a kettle. This was a magical apple which Geso says when opened would release the *pawa* of the *ples daun* and transform Tol into a well-developed city like its underground version. However, when Geso was dropped back off at

[32] Geso uses this term.

[33] Glasman is the Tok Pisin term for a spiritual diviner. Geso embodies many of the roles of a glasman though his powers and abilities are clearly of a higher and more powerful level than most so I refer to him mostly as a sorcerer.

Kavon's place he forgot to get the apple which he left in the back of the vehicle. He laments this missed opportunity to develop Tol and says if he had remembered to bring the apple, he could have used it to transform Tol to be like its underground version that he saw. The *masalais* told Geso through a later vision that he should not forget to take the apple with him the next time he goes to the underground.

As a sorcerer, Geso is a kind of mediator between the living-living and the living-dead and between the seen and the unseen worlds. The *ples daun* or underground he talks about resemble the mirrored underground world of the Bush Kaliai cargo cults on the western side of the island of New Britain. According to Lattas, it was primarily through the alternative gaze provided by the mirror worlds of the underground and the dead that cult followers sought their new identities as remade subjects (1998: xxvi). The return to the past and tradition was simultaneously the movement into one's future form as a white subject whose whiteness had been remade by the cults. It was in the underground that people sought their new national identities as Melanesians while preserving the centrality of their localities, ancestors, and spirit children (Lattas 1998: xxvi). Geso clearly describes a national underground geography of PNG, a psycho-geographic mapping of the country where the provincial centers, like Lae, Port Moresby or Mt Hagen, are well developed. In PNG *ples daun*, Tol is just as developed as all the other urban centers. In his narrative, sorcerers or bigmen like him who are mediators between the socio-geographic and psycho-geographic spaces, to follow Narokobi's cue, or between the seen and unseen worlds, are the ones who hold sway to realize the development potential of PNG 'on top'. In his movements with the powerful *masalais* of PNG *ples daun*, Geso can also be seen as a mediator between the national and local levels of development.

Geso's rendering of the physical world, God and the *ples daun* is a complex mix of tradition, Christianity and modern knowledge as I will show in in the following. According to him, there are three 'planets': the underground world of the spirits, the physical world of the living-living and a third world that exists in the sky. Geso says he does not know much about the third planet because he has never been there. 'Antap igat ston, na rif na giraun tu (up there has stones, reef and ground too)'. Whatever else he knows about the third planet was told to him by the Catholic priest in Milim in 1969. One day the priest told Geso and other villagers that white men had gone to this third planet in the sky. I realize quickly that Geso is likely referring to the American moon-landing and the effects of having no gravity on the moon. He tells me that later he also heard news of the third planet on the radio which confirmed what the priest had told them in church. The priest told them that up there someone can cover long distances when walking. Remembering what the priest had reported in 1969, Geso said that with each step, you can cover long distances. Geso tells me that *Noot* – God in Sulka *tokples* – is in charge of the physical world and the underground. Noot made other supernatural beings too including *pismeri* (mermaids), dwarves, and hairy bushman called *roorus* which is similar to the yeti or Bigfoot. When Noot made these beings, he gave them the ability to wear human skin like shirt or trousers. Geso says that Noot gave them the ability to conceal their true nature from humans who would otherwise fear them and might hurt them.

The Sulka pantheon of spirits is complex and highly populated. Joe Litau is another close

interlocuter of mine and he helped me understand the hierarchy of beings in their spiritual world. Litau is a retired primary school teacher and lives in Guma Village, 17 kilometres southeast along the coastline from Milim. He is another one of Kavon's *tambus* and a regular visitor to Tol as both he and Kavon serve on the high school Board as Chair and Deputy respectively. Whenever Litau is in Tol he usually stays with Kavon so I have had many opportunities to talk with him after my visit to Milim to interview Geso. Litau's explanations make it clear that at the top of the pantheon is Noot who exists in a kind of trintarian state. The term Noot covers two beings Nootvlou and Nootsi – the former is the senior being and Nootsi the junior.[34] Nootvlou created Nootsi to be his helper and together they created or caused the formation of all things. In the Sulka *tokples* Bible the term Nunuatotur is used to refer to the Holy Spirit which in traditional belief might be equated to Nootsi. Noot and the two identities that comprise him are seen as forces of good. Practitioners of traditional magic in the past could source their *pawa* from Noot apart from the bones of *mnes* (Sulka term for corpse). Non-practitioners may call upon Noot for protection during a fight or for fertility for their gardens for instance. The spiritual forces of evil immediately below Noot are Kanmamaing and Kanmoling and the term that covers these two beings is Mokpelpel. These two exist in humanoid form but are gigantic, have tails, are very hairy, and have long fingers. They are said to be cannibals. One version of the Mokpelpel is that Kanmoling is male and Kanmamaing is female but most believe them to be both males since they would otherwise have produced offspring.

There are then the *o'inkoua* which is a plural term referring to many spirits of dead persons. The root word for this term is *ninkoua* that has a descriptive difference to the term *nunu*. Both terms are singular but *nunu*[35] refers to the unseen spirit of a person while *ninkoua* refers to a wandering spirit that might be seen by the living-living. The spirits of the foreign war dead might thus be categorized as *ninkoua* when they appear in the physical world to Samo and other villagers of Koki and Gumgum as apparitions and fireflies.[36] When Geso travelled to the underground with the three *koots* – Malan, Sibinai and the second female *masalai* – it is correct to refer to the human spirits he saw there as *nunu* because they are spirits in their own place. The spirits of the dead here have a dualistic nature and the form they take is determined by their visibility to the living-living and whether they are seen in the physical or spiritual world. In the Sulka cosmology, *nunu* are the sacred ancestral form while *ninkoua* are wandering spirits – ghosts with no attachment to place. However, according to Samo and Geso's accounts, the corporality of corpses establishes a kind of physical-spiritual link that tethers the spirit or ghost to their graves and to their place of death. Even if the ghosts of WWII appear as *ninkoua* and have no apparent place, their memory are still attached to the places of death and so their *nunu* must still be there too.

[34] *Vlou* means big and can be used as a suffix to refer to the senior being while si means small and is used as a suffix in Nootsi to refer to the junior being.

[35] *Nunu* is also used to refer to a persons' soul in the Christian sense.

[36] The Sulka believe that the spirit of a deceased person is never encountered face to face. When such encounters happen, one will only see the back of the ninkoua or other such apparitions.

A type of spiritual being that appears fleetingly is called the *ngoumin*, similar to the Western concept of doppelgänger or *asisi* in the Kaiva context, that usually appears during a death or a big occasion like a *kastam*. Litau explains for instance that a *nunu* may take the physical likeness of a living person and appear at a *kastam*. People at the *kastam* will not know that the person they are interacting with is a *ngoumin*. Later, the person may find out and then tell those who interacted with him or her at the *kastam* that he or she was somewhere else at the time. The person whose physical likeness was used by the *nunu* will then have to seek a *glasman* to use a specific *papait* to protect themselves and 'kisim bek tewel' or take back their spirit that is perceived to have been stolen or used by the *ngoumin* or *nunu*. In actual sense, explains Litau, the *nunu* does not take the persons spirit like a *masalai* would but simply uses their likeness. Litau explains that *ngoumin* is a trick that a *nunu* may play on someone close to them or someone whom they joked around with a lot in life.

In the Kivung concept of life after life, the spirit will *kirap* or rise at death. In the previous chapter I describe the idea of death or *kirap* not as a rising but rather a lateral transference of energy whereby the spirit continues to exist on the same temporal plane. The Kivung conceptualization of death as *kirap* (rising), highly influenced by Catholicism from which it derived much of its membership and doctrines, is a mapping of the Christian concepts of resurrection and ascension onto the way death is verbally articulated. But here this influence is only at the level of semantics, for Kivung descriptions of the spirits and their activities locate them in the same physical space as the living-living. Narokobi's descriptions of the continuation of life after death on the same horizontal plane similarly follow a general domain of human experience of spiritual manifestations in the physical world.

The terms 'death' and 'dead' have Middle English origins meaning 'extinction' or the 'extinction of life'. These definitions however do not satisfy the Catholic Church's understanding of death where it 'does not equal total extinction of the human spirit, for the human self lives on in some spiritual capacity after physical death according to Ekstrom (1995: 91). Death might then be solely categorized as a biological process through which the physical body ceases to function and then decomposes and is ultimately destroyed. I contend that life thus subsumes death as it is experientially the multidimensional persistence of the human 'being' or self (cf. Ferea 2001: 5, discussion of the dual nature of selfhood in Melanesia).

Section 3 – Concluding Remarks

The ghosts of WWII are not anachronistic figures of a bygone episode of war but rather are sociologically present figures whose influence in my fieldsites have direct political implications for the PNG Government and foreign governments. What the ethnographic voices show here is that there are different, even competing explanations of death, ghosts of WWII and their

associations with bones and places of death. People in my fieldsites experiment with their explanations in ways that may be hybrid beliefs mixing personal interpretations of Christianity, traditional beliefs and modern knowledge. For one thing, these narratives highlight the diversity and richness of socio-religious life in my fieldsites and the ways in which they have accommodated the bones and the ghosts of WWII. Ghosts, Kwon notes, are an uninvited category to the paradigm of symbolic conquest. In the language of the rites of passage, they are perpetually liminal beings that are neither entirely separated from the world of mortals nor yet incorporated into the socially defined world of true spirits (van Gennep 1960: 164-5, referenced in Kwon 2008: 22-3). They exist outside the social structure, according to Durkheim, and have no clearly defined social functions. (Kwon 2008: 23) In my fieldsites, however, the ghosts of WWII can and do become emplaced figures much like *sovai*, *nunu* or any living-dead form. Even when they appear as *asisi*, *ninkoua* or uninvited and unsettling apparitions, their corporal remains and their assimilation into the psycho-geographic landscape ensure they are bound to place. The infrastructure of the imposed memoryscape of the war as well as continuing popularity of thanatourism cultivates collective memory, further ensuring the 'collective immortality' of the ghosts of WWII.

How are the ghosts of WWII transformed or transitioned into emplaced ancestral spirits in my fieldsites when there is no clear ritual process by which this is done? In a 1997 case Kwon notes in Vietnam, the spirit of a little girl from Hue who was killed in the 1960s, was adopted by a family in Cam Re after her bones were found there washed downstream by the river. The spirit of the little girl possesses Bien, the farmers young daughter, and speaking through Bien, she reveals her name to be Lotus Flower. Lotus Flower directs the farmer to her bones by the river and the family reinter her remains in their family grave plot. They build a shrine for Lotus Flower and pray to her and she becomes like an ancestor to them (Kwon 2008: 109-13). In the Vietnam context there is a phase of 'explicit assimilation' (Kwon 2008: 118). In contrast, the remains of the American soldier are repatriated back to the US as per government protocols (refer to sec. 1 of this chap.). And after its physical remains are repatriated, the spirit of the American soldier stops inflicting the retired Vietnamese lieutenant. The ghost of the American soldier was not assimilated the way Lotus Flower was.

In Kwon's research, the question of the ghosts of American soldiers is live and plays into that question of the respective status of 'ghost' as opposed to 'ancestor' and barring government processes foreign bones can be repatriated easily. In my PNG fieldsites the transition of the ghosts of WWII to becoming ancestors seems to happen more seamlessly, without an explicit assimilation phase but an assimilation nonetheless, surreptitious as it may be. The idealized form of ancestors or living-dead that are the *sovai* or *baloma* (cf. Battaglia 1990: 68-70) are the source of power and blessing the way Geso and other sorcerers use ancestral bones to power their magic. Geso has now connected to an additional power source for his magic while Akena and Keke continue to cultivate their relationships with their ancestors.

Despite this, I have suggested that the original power sources of Noot and the ancestral bones

are not being effaced but rather that the Christian spirits and ghosts of WWII are being assimilated into the Sulka spiritual world and being given their own space. There they remain, for the potential that future positive relations may be sought from and through them when needed. As the symbolic and utilitarian pillar of the potential of the positive relations between the spiritual and physical spaces or the foreign and domestic, bones too remain as tangible markers and conduits of these potential positive flows. Often, the issue arises with the custody and movement of skeletal remains out from their places of death – like the Divune Mass Burial Site in Gorari or the scattered Australian remains of the Tol massacre site. What do such differences say then about how people understand or interpret the history of WWII and their current relations with the former combatant nations?

There is a standard version of the history of WWII which is taught in schools and endorsed by the PNG Government through gazetted holidays like Kokoda Day: marked on the day the Australian Army recaptured Kokoda Station and there raised the Australian flag on 3 November; and National Remembrance Day marked on the day of the 'baptism of fire' on 23 July. Here I am suggesting a radical shift in thinking about the narrative of WWII in PNG within the official metanarratives. If people in Tol Massacre site and Gorari have different relationships to the ghosts of WWII or the foreign living-dead who are now treated as ancestors, then they can tell different kinds of stories about the war, its meanings and its effects.

What the ethnographic voices in this chapter show is the seamless and surreptitious assimilation of the ghosts of WWII into living-dead form or the recognized ancestral realm. Unlike local dead who need to undergo prevalent mortuary rituals to be transitioned into living-dead or recognized ancestral spirits, the ghosts of war do not seem to need the same process. For them, dying was the ritual, and when it does happen, a ritual is often called for by locals before the bones are removed by the foreign human remains recovery missions. The corporality of corpses and commemorative efforts of the descendants and their governments, supported by the PNG Government, maintain the ghosts of WWII in a state of 'collective immortality' though people may not know their names personally.

If the ontological status of the ghosts of WWII is certain and known in local cosmologies, then what kinds of claims can the living-living in former battlefield sites legitimately make to the former combatant nations? For instance, do they then have a right to ask direct cash payment for the bones of the foreign war dead whose ghosts they have now developed almost kin-like relations with? Or is that crossing the line ethically? What constitutes 'crossing the line' if so? This is something that will be addressed in the next chapter. If the ghosts of WWII are explicitly assimilated in local spiritual worlds, have enduring attachments to their places of death or have rooms in spiritual houses at their graves, then are they really 'foreign', or are just their physical remains foreign? People make no immediate moral or political judgements about bones when they are accidently upturned although they may be identified as Japanese, Australian or American. Through various spiritual manifestations, especially dreams, the bones/spirits reveal

their identity or nationality. In my fieldsites the ghosts of WWII are assimilated without incidence. The political identity or nationality of the skeletal remains only become problematized locally when foreign human remains missions later come to conduct their recovery work. It is in that social domain of the living-living that people make claims surrounding the bones or call for appropriate ritual separation or compensation before bones are removed from their sites of death or burial.

The history of WWII is a lot messier than what official and archival records might portray them to be. Of the many unaccounted soldiers who were listed as MIA or KIA, governments and soldiers' families know little about what became of their corporeal remains. These stories of accidently-dug-up-bones and cosmological configurations of the ghosts of WWII in my fieldsites show the continued life of the living-dead on the same temporal plane with the living-living. The ritual and commemorative efforts described herein, ensure Ferea's fourth and sixth purposes of harmony and coexistence between the living-living and the living-dead: to cultivate peace between people to allow political survival of the community; and to cultivate a religious life that allows the community to survive spiritually. This perhaps can give some comfort to the descendants of unrecovered soldiers that their loved ones have been given a place and a space in Sulka and Kaiva cosmologies at least. Furthermore, these otherworldly relationships have the potential for more positive flows like fostering peaceable bilateral relations in the physical world.

The sociological form of the stranger is, according to Simmel, a synthesis of both the properties of detachment and attachment. The spatial relations surrounding the stranger allow that while he was initially foreign, and necessarily will always be external to certain analogous boundaries, that he remains fixed at certain points (Simmel 1971: 143). What I am suggesting here is that these fixed points or points of attachment include the magico-religious matter of bones, meat, grease and graves that seem to waver between the socio-geographic and psycho-geographic spaces and anchor or disperse memory. The ladder that extends from the grave into the *ples daun* connects the two spaces and allows for positive flows between them. Understanding the role of a mediator (Geso/sorcerer/bigman) between the two worlds would help to realize a mutually beneficial relationship between the living-living and living-dead, local and national and the foreign and domestic spaces. As a sort of state-endorsed mediator between these different spaces and levels, the role of the PNG Museum in the ongoing work of the recovery and repatriation of the foreign war dead will be the topic of Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 - 'Caring for the Living-Dead and Making New Relationships Among the Living-Living'

I walk through these riparian plains
Looking for signs of war
Material, spiritual, whatever remains
From eighty years before

If these old guns could still fire
And skeletons tell a tale
Pride and fervour they'd inspire
At the national and global scale

Chaotic bloody crisis
To be or not to be,
With the Allies or the Axis
Communism or democracy?

Many people I talk with
Young, middle-aged and elderly
Ask what the war did bequeath
To benefit us presently?

Friendships, tourism, foreign aid
Indirect forms of compensation?
For the destruction and rubbish made
In Papua and New Guinea before unification

Kokoda, Oivi and Gorari
Villages history now knows
That would've remained in obscurity
If superpowers hadn't come to blows

As one bigman declared
When asked about the war
Not well, in development terms, we would've now fared
If the fighting hadn't come to our shore

It is the destruction and stories of which
That now give me recognition
So study and understand it I beseech
For the sake of the future generation.

- Gregory Bablis, Gorari Hu, November 2022

In the first four lines of my prefatory poem, I am depicting my simultaneous roles as an ethnographer of the aftermath of WWII and as a PNG Museum officer. Throughout my fieldwork the lines between the two have blurred and have for the most part been mutually beneficial. Stanza one is at the same time acknowledging the work of Kokichi Nishimura, also known by the nickname, 'Bone Man of Kokoda'. His was an unofficial one-man bone-collecting mission that represents the longest sustained effort by an individual Japanese veteran to recover and repatriate the bones of Japanese war dead from PNG. In his quarter century bone-collecting mission based in Oro Province, Nishimura covered the length of the Kokoda Track and back down the Owen Stanley Ranges to the Northern Beaches, including the Kaiva, Hunjara and Kaina villages in between. I shall say more about Nishimura's work in Section 2.

Stanza three calls WWII in PNG for what it was, a 'chaotic bloody crisis' where Papuans and New Guineans had to make choices between supporting the Axis Powers or Allied Forces. Their decisions determined their immediate roles or fates during the war. As seen in Chapter 1, many chose the non-aligned interstitial space of bush-living, hiding out the interwar years. In the post-

conflict bipolar world, communism and democracy emerge as the two major competing ideologies. Papuans and New Guineans once again became subjects of the Australian colonial administration but many people having a broader worldview and different prospects for their own self-determination.

In stanza four I am back again interacting with my interlocutors who question the work of the PNG Museum, my research work as a student and the benefit of these activities for them. The next stanza then suggests that the history and memory of the war affords PNG a unique position in the hearts and minds of the people of former combatant nations who, through bilateral relations that support human remains recovery work and other related projects or thanatourism, maintain close connections with the PNG Government or with villages and villagers directly. The last three stanzas talk about the war being a watershed event, not just because of its immediate socio-political effects but how these have shaped the historical formation of PNG as a sovereign nation and its contemporary development agenda. These ideas will be expounded throughout this chapter and the next. This chapter will move on to consider the ways in which relationships to the ghosts of war and bones of the foreign war dead generate relationships with living foreigners.

Section 1 – Etoa: A Binding Multinational Project

Etoa Battlefield along the Kokoda Track Corridor is a site where the comingled remains of Japanese and Australian soldiers have necessitated cooperation between the two countries. It is land traditionally owned by the Biage people, a mountain tribe of Oro Province that is genealogically and linguistically more related to the Koiari of Central Province than to other tribes of Oro. These two tribes occupy and own much of the lands along the Corridor. In Biage *tokples* 'etoa' means 'washing' and 'drinking', referring to the practical uses of the spring that flows out of an aquifer used by the people of Alola Village. This is a high montane forest and is a traditional hunting ground and gardening area. The fighting of WWII left many mangled corpses and local eyewitness accounts reported the spring waters of Etoa running red from the blood of the dead. For many years after the end of the war, the land and water at Etoa remained disused. The stories alone of the carnage and tainting of the spring waters red in the wake of battle proved a strong psychological deterrent. The forest reclaimed the area and landowners from the nearest Biage village of Alola stayed away from it for at least a decade after the end of the war.

Eventually, the people returned to their old hunting grounds and nearby garden sites. During hunting and gardening excursions people found Lee Enfield and Arisaka rifles still in working condition and there was a surplus of unspent ammunitions to go with them. Damaged guns were fixed, refashioned, and made usable again for hunting. People handpicked items that piqued their interests to be reused or kept as souvenirs. Soldiers' mess kits were washed and used again, helmets were taken as odd hats or for use as water scoopers, and bayonets and knives were important items for any villager. Ivan Senisi's father had a different kind of fascination with the

war surplus materials, and he began amassing a sizeable collection which he kept under his house at Alola Village. When trekking started gaining momentum in the 1990s, he made some income by charging a fee to see his mini-exhibition.

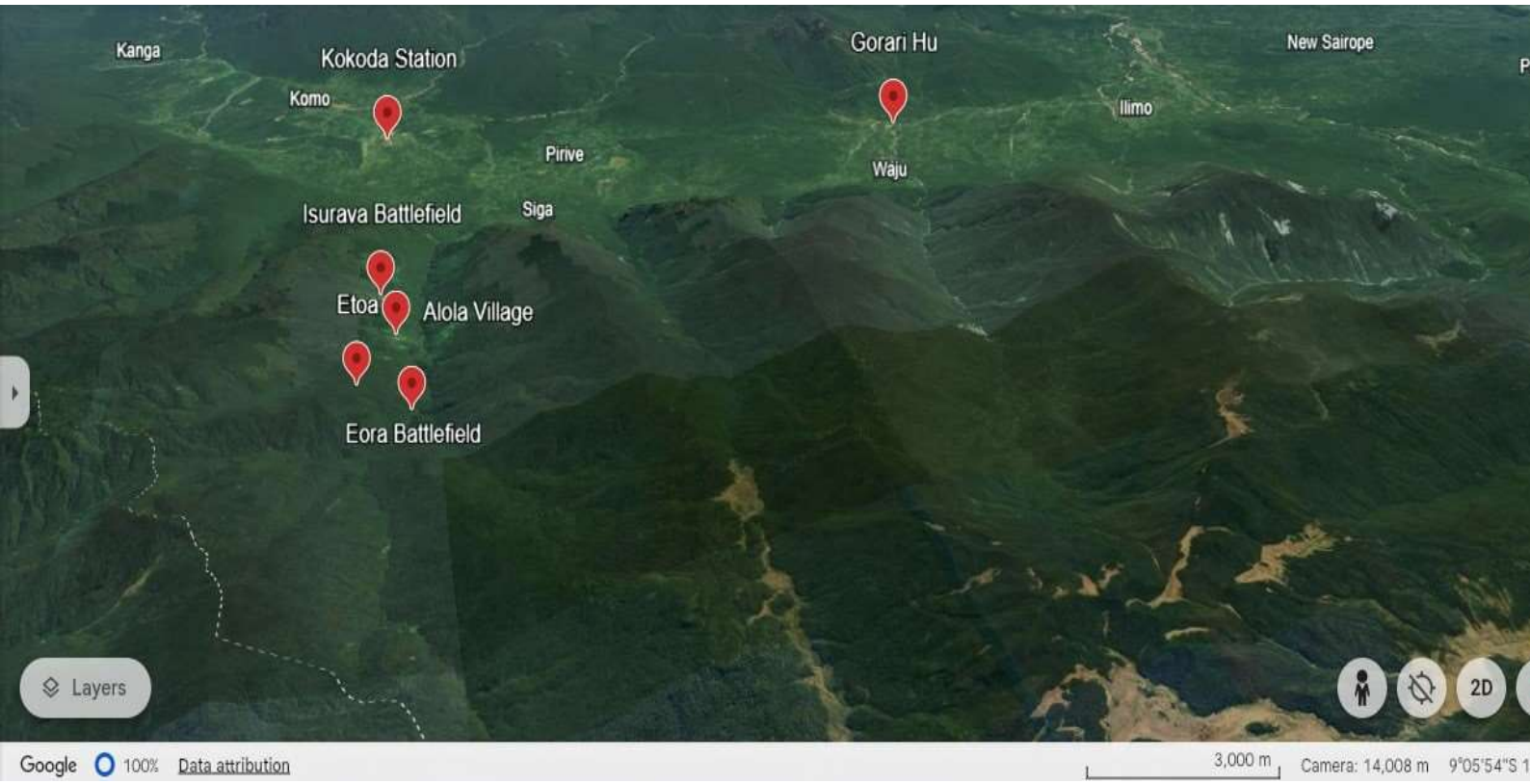


Figure 29. Map showing location of Etoa Battlefield in relation to Eora, Alola Village, northwest of it, Isurava Battlefield and Kokoda Station further north. My fieldsite of Gorari is directly east of Kokoda Station. The white dotted line running along the Owen Stanely Ranges marks the border between Oro and Central provinces. **Google Earth** image.

The fighting at what is now called the Etoa Battlefield occurred in the period 22-29, October of 1942 and ranged from 1,800 meters to 2,100 meters above sea level. These altitudes are about 500 meters above the main fighting route that is today walked by trekkers. Because of the misreading of a topographic military map that foreshortened the range of the WWII battlefield, the significance of Etoa became obscured (Andrew Connelly, *Etoa* 2019). For many decades the site was known only to the people of Alola until 2010 when a local bigman exposed the site to his Australian business partner who immediately realised the significance of the place as being a major WWII battlefield. They began promoting it as 'The Lost Battlefield' or 'The Lost Battlefield of Etoa' to entice trekkers and tourists. Late in 2010 villagers reached an agreement

among their land-owning clans and invited the Department of Environment and Conservation[37] and other relevant PNG and Australian agencies to assess and possibly manage the site. Military records show that over eight days of fighting at least 69 Japanese and 79 Australians died at Etoa.

Immediately after the war, Australian burial parties recovered their dead and reinterred them at Bomana Commonwealth War Cemetery. They buried Japanese corpses back in their own fighting pits and trenches onsite. The records indicate that most of the Japanese remains were unrecovered with some Australians unaccounted for (PNG National Museum & Art Gallery: 27). The area was thus closed off to tourism so that the work of recovering the remains and creating a heritage management plan for the site could take priority. Per the post-WWI practice of the Imperial (later Commonwealth) War Graves Commission (IWGC), Australian war dead of the two world wars were buried overseas, near their sites of death, rather than being repatriated (Beaumont 2016: 356). This practice carries on today so any Australian remains recovered from Etoa will be reinterred at Bomana in Port Moresby.

Because of the few comingled Australian remains among the more numerous Japanese remains, a Joint Forensic Review (JFR) was recommended and organised in 2018. It was agreed that a forensic expert supplied by DPAA, acting on behalf of the PNG Museum, will hold a forensic review of collected remains to establish nationality. JARRWC will have the option of assigning one of their experts for the JFR, as has been the practice between the US and Japanese agencies in other countries. If Japanese nationality is established to the satisfaction of the PNG Museum and JARRWC, remains will be released to the JARRWC. If Australian nationality is established, the Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) will be notified. When nationality remains unclear, further DNA testing will be sought (National Museum & Art Gallery 2019: 13). The work on Etoa thus became a multinational project involving the governments of, Australia, Japan, the US and PNG, with the endorsement of the Etoa landowners.

The first joint mission was carried out from 11th to 15th of June 2018. The international teams flew in two helicopters from Port Moresby, landing at a helipad located about forty-five minutes' hike from the battlefield campsite. A group of around twenty landowners, both men and women, were on hand to meet us. I have been to most of the villages along the Corridor and know the Alola people well but that was my first time to Etoa. We had a briefing at the helipad about our activities over the next four days and then the landowners helped us move all the gear and equipment to the campsite located at 1,921 meters altitude. The atmosphere is cold at those high elevations and the mountains are often overcast with clouds or fog making the already dim forest even duller. The eponymous spring is located a few hundred meters below the campsite.

On the first day, we set up camp and began surveying the battlefield features, noting any depressions that were filled up fighting pits or trenches where we knew most Japanese remains were buried back in. Our method for finding bones was to use a metal detector to scan the soil for metallic items that are usually found on a soldier's body. Belt buckles, shoe heels, apparel buttons, helmets and epaulets were good indicators. After four days of work, we found many metallic war surplus materials but no skeletal remains. For the locals, the lack of success

[37] After a restructure this is now known as the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority.

indicated that a proper *kastam* needed to be done. Below I highlight two incidents in the preceding days that serve as the semiotic linchpins necessitating ritual exchanges not just among the living-living but also between the living-living and the living-dead across the socio-geographic and psycho-geographic spaces.

On the second day of surveying, 12 June, we moved to the upper reaches of the battlefield that ranged above 1,990 meters altitude. Sam Sega, one of the clan heads and the team's lead guide at Etoa, was getting uneasy as we approached the top of the mountain and he slowed down his pace. He and I were walking in front on the narrow bush path while our international colleagues trailed us. As I walked on, I noticed an interesting-looking structure on the ground, in the shrubs to my left. It was the nest of a Bowerbird and I stopped to take photographs of the avian architecture. The architect himself was not home. After I was satisfied with my photographs, I stood to continue but Sega stopped me and suggested that we turn around. I looked ahead and saw a stretch of bamboo thicket hovering over the path fifty meters ahead. I asked Sega if we were near the top of the mountain and he said we were but insisted again that we turn around. When I asked him why, he said 'Mi lukim wasman ya, moran ya, em blokim rot antap so yumi tanim na wok go daun lo narapla rot. (I saw the *wasman*, a big snake, that is blocking the path ahead so let us continue our survey down another path)'. I could not see the moran but knew to take seriously his concerns. I took a GPS point at the spot we turned around, 2,001 meters, and when our other colleagues caught up, I told them what Sega saw and explained why we needed to turn back. Most of the team members understood at least that the top was taboo, for whatever reason, even if they did not believe in the explanations I gave.

The second occurrence that created a moment of pause for Sega involved the semiotics of a dream I had the evening after the encounter with the *wasman*. It was a peculiar nighttime experience I can only describe as being in a woken-sleep state, similar to Geso's method for moving in between the socio-geographic and psycho-geographic spaces and I cannot say whether my own experience was a dream or a vision.

The spot where I had set up my tent was on a slope, and I laid on my back with my feet facing uphill. I had removed the tent's top cover and was gazing at the fireworks of fireflies through the little window as I allowed the forest symphony of insects to lull me to sleep. In the experience, I remember the whole front of my tent suddenly becoming translucent, so it was like I was stargazing in a planetarium. As I looked on, three tall shadowy figures propped up in front of me. They hovered over my tent, giving me blank stares with their red-dotted eyes. I felt no fear and sensed no anger from the dark lanky beings. I could not move my body but did not struggle or try to talk. The experience probably lasted three minutes after which I slept soundly and woke up feeling rejuvenated in the morning. Upon waking I immediately went to the landowners' tents a little way downhill, on the edge of the patch of forest clearing that was our campsite, to tell them about my experience.

Sega listened intently to my recounting before telling me his explanation of my dream. We were sat around a fire warming our bodies and had a kettle of water on to make coffee. Sega explained that Alola comprises three Biage clans – Vovoli, Babila and Elomi. Out of them,

Babila is the largest and has two sub-clans, namely Donabe 1 and Donabe 2, which had three prominent leaders who passed away years ago. One of these bigman was Sega's own father. Sega told me that a *wasman*, who appears in the form of a 'white man' or a *moran* (Tok Pisin for large snake) also guards the area along with the ancestral spirits. Sega's interpretation was that,

> Ol displa tripla tumbuna, wantaim ol narapla na masalai blo ples, ol stap longpla taim na was lo Etoa. Taim wo kam na ol Jepen na Ostralia fait na kilim ol yet lo hia, spirit blo ol soldia we ol i dai lo hia em ol i stap bek ananit lo lukaut na was blo ol tumbuna na masalai. Sapos mipla nau laik digim na rausim ol bun blo ol, mipla mas wokim kastam lo hamamasim ol na ol bai helpim mipla na putim ol bun kamap ples klia blo yumi lo painim na ol lain blo ol kisim go.
>
> These three ancestors, along with other ancestors and the wasman have been looking after Etoa for a long time. When the war came and Japan and Australia fought and killed themselves here, the spirits of the soldiers killed here then remained here under the care and oversight of the ancestors and wasman. So if we now want to dig and remove the bones of these spirits (ghosts of war), we have to do a kastam to make them happy and they will help us by revealing the bones to us so that we may find them easily and their people can take them.

Sega sensed that my dream or experience was not a bad sign. He suggested that it was a message to the PNG Museum and international team that we should do a *kastam* to *hamamasim* (Tok Pisin term for 'make happy') the ancestral spirits and the *wasman* of Etoa Battlefield area.

Back in Port Moresby I reported Sega's advice to my Australian colleagues, though I did not tell them about my nocturnal encounter. I suggested this *kastam* be done on our next mission to Etoa and they agreed. We informed the JARRWC team about doing the *kastam* and they understood the significance of it, at least in gaining access to the site and building their relationship with the landowners, and so they agreed. The next mission was scheduled for February 16-19, 2019. On the advice of Sega and his clansmen, the JARRWC team purchased ten cartons of lamp flaps to be used for the *kastam*. Traditionally, a pig would be in order but it was not possible to fly a pig over to Etoa by helicopter even if it was sourced from a nearby village, so lamp flaps meat was allowed as a substitute.

Saturday, 16 February 2019 we were back at Etoa early in the morning. It was agreed that the *kastam* would be done first and work would not start until the following day. The *kastam* was a ceremonial gesture of food offering and consisted of burning the meat, and Sega talking, asking the spirits for their help to make the mission successful. A large fire was made in the bush, away from the campsite. One carton of lamp flaps was opened. Sega took out and held in his hands a large slab of meat as he addressed his *tumbuna* and the Etoa *wasman*,

> We are not seeing anything here, so we have brought a small piece of meat to cook. This meat that we will cook, come and share amongst yourselves, and bring out the things

(bones) that you are hiding. Bring out the bones of the Japanese and Australians and we can come and get them and be happy. We have brought this small food so come and receive it and bring out the bones that you are hiding so that we can take them with us. I am cooking it now (translated from Biage tok ples).

He then knelt and placed the slab of meat on the fire. All members of the international team observed the ceremony and took the remainder of the day off. Other Biage men made fires in various locations around the bush and burned their own slabs of meat – maybe three or four pyres in all. After the ceremony I asked Sega if the spirits physically eat the meat offerings and he said that 'Abus trutru em dok o muruk o ol narapla enimol bai kaikai na ol spirit bai kaikai smel blo abus tasol. (The actual meat will be eaten by dogs or cassowaries and the spirits will eat the smell of the meat.)' Most of the cartons of meat were distributed among themselves for their own consumption and some were brought back to relatives in their village.

The ritual involved an exchange between the living-living and the living-dead. Sega on behalf of his living kin and the international team asked his *tumbuna* and the *wasman* to help them find the bones of the soldiers. In his own words, the spirits have hidden or concealed the bones and so he offered the meat in exchange for them to make the bones discoverable by the team. The burning of the meat is essential in this ritual because that is what converts the physical object into a form that can be accepted and 'consumed' by the spirits. The burning of the meat converts the offering into an exchangeable form acceptable by the spirits while most of the meat are distributed among the people. Some meat and store goods like pots and clothing material bought by the Japanese, were given to two old ladies in the village[38] whose husbands are now two of the three ancestors watching over Etoa.

The exchanges in the ritual thus occur between the living-living and the living-dead and between the living-living themselves. Even if one does not believe in the conversion and exchanges with the spirits, it is undeniable that the exchanges among the living-living are important to strengthening relations and to allowing foreigners to gain access to battlefield lands. In diplomatic terms the ritual can be seen as a gesture of good faith and of opening and assuring peaceable relations among all involved.

Over the next three working days and a subsequent mission in August 2019, at least three human remains were recovered, represented by two almost complete corpses and a partial skull fragment. Also found was a wooden Japanese Hanko stamp personalized for a soldier named Komatsu, though we did not find any skeletal remains around where his stamp was unearthed.

[38] One of the old ladies is Sega's mother.

Figure 30. Photographs of Japanese Hanko recovered from Etoa belonging to Komatsu. Photo credit: Dr Matthew Kelly.

We dug up helmets, shoe heels, Arisaka and Lee Enfield rifle rounds, M28 Thompson sub-machine rounds and many other war surplus materials. Some of these were left in situ and some were brought back to Port Moresby to curate an Etoa exhibition with.

The Etoa multinational project gave the Japanese and Australian team members a new understanding and appreciation of the Papua New Guinean involvement in the war as well as the importance of local partnerships in their present human remains recovery work. Commenting on the project, the JARRWC team leader, Kazuhiko Kurita, said,

> While exploring this area with the locals I realized the importance of the fact that seventy years ago, Papua New Guinea was in the middle of the fight between Japan, America and Australia. As a result, Papua New Guinea locals also suffered a lot. I always put that into mind whenever I explain the project to the locals. I'm sure that I wouldn't be able to find anything just by myself. Without the cooperation with the locals, Japan wouldn't be able to excavate for remains (*Etoa* 2019).

The project's lead archaeologist, an Australian named Matthew Kelly, states that,

> Being involved with the Japanese, in concert with the locals, I think speaks of this area being part of the past, its significance should never be forgotten, but the work we're doing is certainly building for the present and building for the future. Local people, Papua New Guinean Government, the National Museum understands this. The local people themselves see themselves as part of that process and their initiative to get archaeologists involved to repatriate the remains in the first place in 2010 I think speaks of their part in this reconciliation if I can put it like that (*Etoa* 2019).

The sentiments shared by Kurita and Kelly were made in the context of a PNG Museum documentary filmed onsite over the course of the two 2019 missions to Etoa. In a broader sense these kinds of collaborative efforts of human remains recovery, identification and repatriation help with ongoing reconciliation between former combatant nations and Papua New Guineans.[39] This kind of work helps to grow partnerships and strengthen bilateral relations. As a corollary, in November 2000 US President Bill Clinton visited an excavation site of an F-105 fighter-bomber that crashed in November 1967 in Vietnam. A team of American forensic anthropologists were there in search of the pilot who had been listed as MIA. At the excavation site, Clinton thanked the large group of local Vietnamese villagers hired for digging, 'Once we met here as adversaries. Today we work as partners.' Kwon notes that it was later reported in the news that Clinton's visit was 'to bury the Vietnam War' in preparation for a new diplomatic relationship with Vietnam (2008: 44).

Other colleagues and I also make relevant commentaries in the forty-five minutes' production titled *Etoa*. In the film Sega has the last say about the importance of the multinational project and the Etoa Battlefield site for him and his people,

> It will support us and it will continue to support my children and grandchildren. We are happy that this site is here and will be like a memorial that will make other people remember my place and create a legacy so that the site will continue to support us into the future (*Etoa* 2019). (Translated from Tok Pisin).

For Sega and his people, the role of their *tumbuna* in locating the skeletal remains of the war dead and making the multinational project a success is undeniable. The finding of skeletal remains has only been possible because of the ritual to solicit the assistance and intervention of their *tumbuna* and the *wasman*. On paper, the work of recovering the bones of the war dead would not be possible without the initial invitation and continued support and goodwill of the landowners. What is also certain is that the work of recovering the bones of the war dead at Etoa will continue until all outstanding Japanese and Australian remains have been found. For the foreign others this means that their relationship with the people of Alola is as important as their working relationships with the PNG Government and must remain amenable. For the landowners it is an opportunity for more exchanges in terms of development projects like the tourism potential of the site and local employment.

There are important differences worth noting in the practices of each country in relation to human remains recovery work. The Japanese and the Americans repatriate the bones of their war dead to their countries while the Australian protocol is to bury their war dead at one of the Commonwealth cemeteries in PNG – Bitapaka, Bomana or Lae. Australians who want to pay their respects to the known graves of fallen soldiers must return to PNG to do so. As Beaumont

[39] See Starr's example in which war cemeteries are reconciliation landscapes and sites of memory that continue to resonate with visitors long after their establishment. She uses the example of the Cowra WWII prison camp near Canberra, Australia, where both Japanese and Australians are buried. Starr continues that the Cowra cemetery spaces have acted as stages to provide a setting for transcultural commemorative engagement, activated on specific occasions by participants that lead or contributed, or simply act as witness to the commemorative process, and supported by the places and relationships that have resulted from the Cowra-Japan relationship (Starr 2022: 27).

(2016: 356) notes, overseas sites of war memory are invested with a political and emotional significance for Australians that is arguably greater than for many other peoples. The burying of war dead near their sites of death entails certain responsibilities not just to the war dead but to the countries where the cemeteries are maintained. The keeping of the cemeteries further entails continued rights to the land – rights to bury the war dead on the land, develop the land on which the war dead are buried as necessary and make all important decisions relating to the work of caring for and maintaining the graves of the war dead.

The three Commonwealth War Cemeteries in PNG are spiritual embassies of sorts and are constant reminders to maintain diplomatic relations if only to continue the work of caring for their war dead. As with any foreign mission, the PNG Government relinquishes its rights to the land on which an embassy is built. The land, property and persons become inviolable and immune from the laws of the host country (The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961). The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, formerly IWGC, was established by Royal Charter in 1917. The Royal Charter was an instrument used by the monarch to incorporate an organisation, give it a legal personality, and give it rights and responsibilities which included ownership of land. This technically means that when PNG gained independence in 1975, the war cemeteries at Bitapaka, Bomana and Lae, were the only portions of land in the former territory that remained and continues to remain under Australian control.

According to Laqueur, new cemeteries are places of sentiment loosely connected, at best, with Christian piety and intimately bound up with the emotional economics of family. In it, a newly configured idolatry of the dead served the interests less of the old God of religion than of the new gods of memory and history: secular gods. Laqueur (2015: 212) continues that national cemeteries testify to an imagined community – a nation – and its shared history as represented by its honoured special dead. The maintaining of war cemeteries in other countries represent special and long-term relations between two countries. Anderson for instance states that,

> Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity / genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. Javanese villagers have always known that they are connected to people they have never seen, but these ties were once imagined particularistically – as indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship and clientship (1983: 6).

If Australia's national identity is bound up with relations and obligations to its war dead and other extra-territorial heritage like the Kokoda Track (cf. Beaumont 2016: 356 & Nelson 1997: 159-160) then this creates an entanglement of interests, roles, and responsibilities between the two countries. These entanglements can sometimes turn contentious, which I will show in the next chapter.

Section 2 – The Bone Man of Kokoda

This section will consider the story of Kokichi Nishimura as a concrete example of a foreign other, an individual war veteran, who goes to PNG and establishes relationships with villagers through his personal bone-collecting mission. Having served in both Rabaul in January 1942 and along the Kokoda Track six months later, his wartime movements in a way links my two fieldsites in a way that will become clear later.

I first heard of Nishimura's incredible story in 2019 when on assignment to Oro Province. A rather late introduction on my part considering I had been working in the space since 2013. That was probably not unexpected though since the Australian narrative dominates the memoryscape of the Kokoda Track 'Corridor' – a catchword used by the PNG Museum to refer to the popularly-walked 96-kilometer stretch of track between Owers Corner in Central Province and Kokoda Station in Oro Province. Additionally, I have a closer working relationship with Australian counterparts as the PNG Museum receives a lot of funding and support from the Australian Government. Yet it was a senior Australian colleague, with whom I had flown from Port Moresby to Girua Airport that morning, who told me of Nishimura's story. This was a regular trip for my colleagues and I. The forty minutes' flight route between Port Moresby and Popondetta is the shortest in PNG and has an early-bird flight and a late afternoon time slot. This means that we can do short trips to Oro in one working day: fly over early in the morning, complete planned tasks and be back in Port Moresby late in the afternoon. After being picked up from the airport by our driver we visited Nishimura's old house at Kakandetta, right in Popondetta Town. Sarigari, Nishimura's adopted son, now lives in the house with his wife and family. Nishimura had befriended Sarigari and recruited him to be the principal of a school he established in 1980 near town.

Despite our early morning intrusion, Sarigari was very welcoming and happily engaged with us and told us more about Nishimura's bone-collecting mission or *ikotsu shūshū*[40] (Nishino 2022:161). Nishimura was the archetypal foreign veteran but his loyalty and commitment to his fallen comrades especially after the war sets him apart from most WWII veterans of any country. According to Nishino, PNG has never been a major tourist destination for the Japanese in the post-war period. Yet, he continues, as with other Pacific Islands, veterans and families of deceased soldiers visit PNG, often on multiple occasions, to conduct *ireishiki* (spirit-consoling services, in a similar manner to a pilgrimage) and to grieve and console the spirit of the dead in accordance with the Japanese Buddhist custom (Nishino 2022: 161). Apart from official bone-collecting missions by the Japanese Government since 1954, there have been some veterans and bereaved family members who go to PNG to do their own *ikotsu shūshū* though nothing on the scale of Nishimura's.

[40] *Ikotsu shūshū* literally translates to protecting or guarding the remains of the dead.

Nishimura joined the Imperial Japanese Army on 22 September 1941, assigned to the 144th Regiment under the Japanese Army or South Seas Detachment, a unit that was the Japanese version of the US Marines. The 144th formed the nucleus of the Japanese Army's infantry and consisted of 3,500 troops who would become specialists at coastal invasion and beach landings (Happell 2008: 18-9). Just a few months later, on 22 January 1942, Nishimura was a part of the 13,000 strong Japanese force that took over Rabaul dispelling the Australian defenders and taking many prisoners. On 23 January Corporal Nishimura led the march into a deserted Rabaul Town which they took over without any resistance. Less than two weeks later, the 3rd Battalion of the 144th Regiment carried out the Tol Plantation Massacre. Nishimura and his 2nd Battalion were stationed around Rabaul where he also worked as a prison guard. According to Happell's biography of Nishimura, the massacre at Tol did not sit well with the young corporal.

Nishimura notes that a day before their landing at Rabaul, a Japanese reconnaissance plane crashed into a mountain in low cloud and both pilots were killed. The Australians dug a grave and gave them a proper burial. When the Japanese command subsequently learned of this civilised act, a directive was issued strictly forbidding the abuse of Australian prisoners who were to be treated well (Happell 2008: 28-9). The massacre of 160 Australian soldiers by the 3rd Battalion was in contravention to that directive. The humane treatment of Japanese war dead by Australian soldiers meant something to Nishimura. This reflected in his treatment of Australian POWs in Rabaul, two of whom he befriended. According to Nishimura,

> One of the prisoners had been a sewage worker before the war. He showed me a picture of his wife in a swimsuit. Both men gave me their names and addresses in Melbourne, and we all pledged to get in touch after the war. But I lost the piece of paper when my troopship was torpedoed and sunk by an American submarine near Taiwan late in 1943. It was one of my great regrets after the war that I was not able to contact the men or their families (Happell 2008: 29).

The proper treatment of enemy war dead engenders mutual respect and empathy in some, like Nishimura, yet it did not have the same effect on the perpetrators of the Tol Massacre Plantation. Harrison suggests that the murdering and torture of prisoners of war are maladaptive responses or misconduct stress behaviour brought about by battle fatigue or combat stress (2012: 2). According to his biography, Nishimura's 5th Company reached Basabua Beach on the Northern shores of Oro Province on 29 July 1942. From there they marched west to Kokoda Station without much resistance as the fighting had progressed further along the Kokoda Track by then. Nishimura did not see much action until later the following month at Myola on the Central District side of the Kokoda Track (Happell 2008: 41). Three months later in November the Japanese were on the retreat and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions had established a base at Waju, which they called Baribe. The Battle of Oivi-Gorari ensued between 04 November and 11 November where at least 600 Japanese soldiers were killed. Their surviving comrades buried as many as they could near where they died around Waju.

After the war Australian burial parties buried still-exposed Japanese corpses in mass graves

around the eastern and western banks of the Divune River near Gorari Hu. The work of burying the dead was a necessary appendage to each battle or skirmish to make it easier to retrieve the dead later and to prevent mutilation or trophy-taking by the enemies (cf. Harrison 2012). Soldiers had to disregard the immediate physical and emotional impact of the fighting on them and attend to the wounded and the dead (cf. Faust 2008: 61). In the immediate aftermath of battles, and often with the urgency to continue forward or retreat, graves were shallow, unmarked, and not properly marked or were communal as with mass graves. This is the nature of most wartime graves around Gorari which make them both hard to find and easy to stumble upon at the same time.

Retreating to the northern shores where he had landed months earlier, Nishimura joined the Battle of the Northern Beaches from 19 November until he was evacuated on 12 January 1943 to Japanese-held Lae (Happell 2008: 70). The sick, wounded, and immobile were left to continue fighting and cover the escape of the able-bodied soldiers. As he withdrew, Nishimura made this promise to his comrades, 'If you die here, we will collect your bones and bring them back to your families in Japan' (Happell 2008: 73). Based on this promise made to his dying comrades, a retired Nishimura would return to Oro Province in 1979 to begin his self-funded bone-collecting mission. In a little over twenty-five years, he would go on to recover hundreds of his comrade's skeletal remains. Nishimura was thus dubbed the Bone Man of Kokoda by his biographer, Happell – an Australian journalist.

The Australian Government granted access to the Japanese Government to begin recovering their war dead from the territory in 1954. In early 1955 the Japanese Government-chartered ship, *Taisei Maru*, visited New Guinea and other territories and recovered the remains of 5,093 remains (Happell: 176). Nishimura began his personal bone-collecting mission just four years after PNGs independence in 1975. While searching for the bones of his comrades in Oro, he was cognizant of giving something back to the people on whose land he was working. Using his own funds, and later through Japanese Government grants he applied for, Nishimura built schools in Popondetta, brought in earthmoving machinery to build roads, funded water projects, bought ships to service people on the coast among other humanitarian projects.

Human remains are recovered at the intersection of differing ideas and beliefs about the memorial and spiritual value of bones in the mediation of relationships. Keiko Tamura, who features alongside me and other colleagues on the PNG Museum documentary about Etoa Battlefield, explains a key Japanese rationale behind human remains recovery missions. According to Tamura, a person who has just died does not realize immediately that he or she has passed away. It becomes the responsibility of the family and living to help the newly-deceased come to terms with their death and to transition their spirits into the other world. The transition is a ritual process that require bones of the deceased as they are believed to contain the spirit of the dead person. Tamura explains that the spirits of the war dead whose bones have not been found are not peacefully settled. By repatriating skeletal remains back to Japan, at least the soul of the war dead returns to Japan (*Etoa* 2019).

More broadly, this work is an attempt to recover meaning and pride in the sacrifice of Japan's soldiers, and to carve out a national space for their commemoration (cf. Trefalt 2015: 270). JARRWC's modus operandi is to bring the bones or bone ashes of the war dead back to the Yasukuni Shrine or the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery in Tokyo.[41] Its work is oriented towards the national space of memory and history. Nishimura on the other hand went to great lengths to identify individual corpses and reconnect them directly with living relatives who could reinter their remains in private family shrines. His concern was with the private space of memory and remembrance. Nishimura is highly critical of the MHLW and of JARRWC. Of the decision to incinerate bones and bury them at one of the national shrines, he complains that 'These young conscripts died for Japan, but they were treated no better than criminals.' 'They don't care', he accuses the Japanese Government (McNeill 2008: 3). Nishimura's strained relationship with Japanese authorities highlight the tensions between the private and public space of memory and remembering; between national sentiment and identity and kin obligations; as well as intergenerational shifts in values. It also shows differing ideas about how the dead should be cared for.

One such case of Nishimura going out of his way to identify and reunite bones with kin was of a distinctive skull he unearthed from the south Girua area along the Northern Beaches. The skull stood out because it had four gold teeth and would make it easier than most to try to locate the living relatives or at least the former regiment. A decade after he had found it Nishimura flew back to Japan to conduct more research about the skull. After about two months of research, he found a name – Takashi Yokokawa. But the family refused to take the remains, citing that Yokokawa had shamed the family because of his hedonistic lifestyle drinking and womanizing before the war. Such refusal of a body is almost unheard of in the PNG context even for morally wayward individuals.

A disappointed Nishimura then managed to handover the skull to the chairman of the Bereaved Family Association of the War Dead that was also associated with Yokokawa's 41st Regiment in the Hiroshima Prefecture. Happell notes Nishimura's satisfaction,

> One Japanese soldier had been brought home, if not to the bosom of his family then at least to his home town. And now, in Japanese Buddhist tradition, he could be worshipped with all other war dead as a divine spirit (2008: 198).

In the association's chairman, Happell notes that Nishimura had 'found someone who shared the same feelings of pity as he did for the thousands of war dead, and the same unbridled and steadfast sense of duty in trying to set their troubled souls at rest' (2008: 198).

Nishimura's post-retirement bone-collecting mission was not just a physical search for the corporeal remains of the war dead but also an eschatological exercise concerned with the

[41] Sometimes bones are brought back to Japan for incineration at the Chidorigafuchi Cemetery, Japan's equivalent of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; unidentified bodies cannot be interred in family plots or enshrined at Yasukuni, the official memorial for military dead (McNeil 2008: 3). And sometimes the Japanese Embassy in PNG organises for the incineration of bones and just the ashes are returned to Japan (Nelson 2008: 2).

transition and settlement of the ghosts of war. The Japanese Government treatment of the war dead is oriented towards national commemoration and its soldiers sacrifices whereas veterans and bereaved families place more value on the sacred family shrine where individual souls/spirits can be properly transitioned into the other world. Nishimura understood the importance of securing the bones of his dead comrades to console their souls/spirits in the spiritual world. For Kwon (2008: 27), ghosts of war in Vietnam are evidence (and, at the same time witnesses) of violent death in displacement, and it follows that their perceived vitality in the social world is inseparable from the enduring materiality of displaced mass death in the living environment. Bones represent an important part of the materiality of war, and they are necessary for Japanese burial rituals as explained by Nishino,

> As anthropologist Namihira Emiko documents, funeral customs in Japan require the mourners to see the dead person before sending them off to the realm of the dead. The mourners then cremate the body and put the ashes in the family grave. Thus, for a bereaved family, not seeing their loved ones and not knowing their whereabouts is tantamount to leaving them in the unconscionable halfway zone between the living and the dead. During the war, the Japanese military had little capacity to repatriate bodies and remains. The compromise was to send an empty box to the family containing a note acknowledging the soldier's service and sacrifice, and sometimes sand or seashells from the beach were included as a substitute for the body of the dead. The military reasoned that the sand contained the spirit of the deceased. Many families found no solace in this: they felt deprived of their chance to perform their final rites for the dead (2022: 170).

Many families of deceased soldiers and veterans who never received skeletal remains go to PNG to conduct *ireishiki*. For them just being in PNG, at a former battlefield site or site of death is another way of making a spiritual connection with their loved ones or even encountering the ghosts and spirits of the dead.[42] Nishino (2022: 170-1) further notes how some Japanese individuals may collect items from the battlefield or even just soil as proxies for missing bones to make the spiritual connection or to use for burial rituals. The materiality of the war helps the bereaved focus their grief and become the accoutrements of death rituals. The many Japanese dead missing from home burials, in particular, underscores the importance of Nishimura's work and of the PNG Museum's ongoing facilitation of JARRWC missions.

Nishimura's commitment to recovering and repatriating his comrades' bones/spirits back to Japan led him to a closer relationship with the people whose villages and land he was working on. His work necessitated peaceable relationships with landowners of former battlefield sites where his comrades' bones remained unrecovered. Nishimura needed to secure their goodwill and patronage to allow him access to their lands. This he did through the development projects he delivered to them. For instance, after building a workshop next to his Kakandetta house to

[42] Nishino notes that, 'Ordained Buddhist priest and anthropologist Nakayama Kaoru officiated at spirit-consoling services in PNG between 2001 and 2012. He repeatedly witnessed the pilgrims relishing their encounters with the ghosts and spirits of the dead, which gave their journeys greater emotional depth. Encounters with the supernatural and the surreal provide opportunities for visitors to claim that their trips are worthwhile and even authentic for attaining spiritual unity with the dead' (2022: 171).

train locals the trade of a mechanic, Happell notes that,

> For Nishimura, it was another sign of his goodwill, an illustration that he wanted to help Papuans – as long as there was a measure of cooperation in return. He wanted to contribute to PNG's community life by teaching the local people skills in exchange for their help. It was against his principles to buy bones with money. He wanted to build a relationship based on trust and friendship, rather than profit (2008: 203).

Nishimura was strongly against locals digging up skeletal remains, displaying them on stalls for tourists and selling them. In one instance he chastised some villagers he encountered doing this, admonishing them in disgust, 'What if it was a member of your family? Would you treat them like this?' (McNeil 2008: 4). Though he did not want to buy bones with money, my Gorari informants indicate that he did do this, or at least indirectly through his adopted son Sarigari.[43] I cannot say whether Nishimura was knowingly involved, but I can speculate about his reasons if he did facilitate such payments through Sarigari. It was certainly a practical method for expediting his work and generating leads about the location of bones. I would differentiate Nishimura's mission, to facilitate the return of Japanese souls to Japan, from tourist activities or trophy-taking practices so doing whatever necessary, like paying for bones or exchanging other items for bones may have been justifiable in his own mind or at least Sarigari's.

The following story illustrates an example of selling bones of the foreign war dead in Oro. It is recounted by Nick Araho. Retiring from the PNG Museum in 2020, he was living in his village of Hanjiri, 3 to 4 kilometres east from Gorari, by the time I began my fieldwork. He was a regular visitor to my house in Gorari Hu and we often discussed museum work, local development issues and many other things.

On one of his visits Araho gave his recollection of a JARRWC mission in 1987 that he was assigned to. At the time he was the Principal Curator of the Prehistory & Archaeology Department and was accompanying the Japanese team to Oro. A native of the province, he was the most appropriate officer to work with the foreign team. They checked into Lamington Hotel, now the Comfort Inn, right in the middle of Popondetta Town, for mobilisation and debriefing. The next day they visited Buna and other parts of the Northern Beaches but did not recover any human remains. The following day they drove up to Gorari to search the Divune Mass Burial Site. They were shown the partial remains of a pair of bones that were unearthed the previous year by Graydon Ijumi while gardening at the site. Ijumi had reburied the bones and marked the spot by placing stones over it, knowing that 'ol lain blo em bai kam painim em yet (his people will still come and look for him)', as he would tell me in Tok Pisin over thirty years later. The Japanese team were not able to secure the bones that day. Araho tells me that Keke and his clansmen of the Tausuva-Ferahane Clan made some demands that the foreign team could not meet. So again, the JARRWC team went back to Lamington Hotel empty handed. Then the next

[43] Refer to sec. 1, chap. 3 where Anjeka brings a Japanese toothbrush upturned with some bones and sold it to Sarigari in Popondetta Town.

day, Araho says that a Milne Bay man, whose wife was from Buna, went along with his *tambus* to town with some recovered Japanese bones. Araho's recollection of the events goes that,

> One [person] might have brought in the head (skull), another brought in a leg and another brought in some other body part. I don't remember specifics but definitely different body parts from one single body. I think the family that demonstrated this technique were maybe three; the father and maybe two relatives. The father and maybe sons or uncles, so three individuals. Three individuals for one whole body. They brought in different body parts claiming that these body parts were representative of one whole body of which maybe 90 percent was missing or 99 percent was missing. They came in all at the same time. I don't know if they asked bluntly for payment but I think their tambu, the Milne Bay guy was their intermediary (middleman) and negotiated on their behalf. I think they would have been paid maybe K10, K20 or K30 but not more than K50 (for each body part). And then the rumour I heard was that they took that money and they went up to this Milne Bay fellow's shop and they got store goods. I've seen this guy around. I don't know if his trade store is still there but the fellow is still around.

Araho tells me that the female Japanese officer who had to pay for the bones later wept about the nature of the transactions that she had to be a part of. Like Nishimura, she probably viewed the locals' actions as highly disrespectful, dehumanising the skeletal remains of the Japanese war dead and reducing them to the level of objects to be owned, moved, and sold. On another note, though, this is exactly what PNG Museum policies do to the bones of the war dead but for different ends – something I will address in the next chapter.

The peculiarity with the Northern Beaches area that led to the 'bone trade' in the 1990s was 'the scale of the dying in that area where Japanese bodies were bulldozed into mass graves' (Nelson 2008: 2). Nelson notes that in the extreme a whole skeleton was sold for US$20,000 while plastic bags of a few bones went for as low as K5 or K10. Villagers said they were under pressure from local and foreign entrepreneurs to scavenge for relics (Nelson 2008: 2). A Sydney Morning Herald article reported of a villager, named Luke Doari, from the Northern Beaches area that 'he and a partner dug up 53 skeletons of Japanese soldiers and sold them for 100 kina ($40) each to an American buyer attached to an oil exploration company between 1997 and 1998.' Doari is reported as saying that, 'the American told them he was given 30,000 kina ($12,000) by Japanese friends to buy as many skeletons as possible (The Sydney Morning Herald 6 October 2007: 1). This and other reports in both the PNG and Australian newspapers indicate that the so-called 'bone trade' began around 1997. However, Araho's report of the 1987 JARRWC mission shows that it began at least a decade earlier.

It is easy to condemn the actions of the Buna contingent as unethical but I would suggest that at the core of the issue are the notions of ownership – of the land on which the war dead have been buried since the end of the war, of the heritage and historical resources and their economic potential – and of relations – to the land, its use and who has access to it and its resources; and to the spirits believed to occupy the space. Common remarks I get from landowners, in Oro and in ENBP, when they first report bones found on their land are,

Em graun blo mi so ol mas baim mi sapos ol laik rausim bun blo ol.

It is my land so they must pay me if they want to remove the bones.

Longpla taim mipla lukautim ol displa bun stap lo graun blo mipla na et list ol mas makim sampla kastam o peimen lo luksave lo mipla bifo ol rausim bun blo ol.

For a long time we have looked after the bones on our land and they must at least do a kastam or make some form of payment to acknowledge our custodianship before they remove their bones.

Mi hatwok lo digim, rausim bun na lukautim stap so ol mas baim tuat blo mi.

It was hard work for me to dig, recover the bones and keep them safe so they must pay for my sweat (labour).

The first two responses very clearly revolve around relationships to and ownership of the land. A landowner asks for payment, not necessarily for the bone or for the labour involved in finding it but because of his or her proprietorship right to the land. Or a landowner asks for payment as acknowledgement of their custodianship over the bones and spirits on their land over many decades since the end of the war. The person making the claim may not have been alive immediately after the war but it is his or her line of kin that have since then owned the land. This is a collective acknowledgement for 'looking after' the bones and spirits of the war dead for many years. Using the Tok Pisin term *lukautim* (looking after), implies that they knew of the presence of bones and took steps to avoid upturning them. In most cases though, finding bones is coincidental while digging postholes for a house or gardening.

The last example may seem purely motivated by profit, but it really speaks to the same notions because as landowners they reserve the right to benefit from the historical or heritage resources of their land. Overall, their professed ownership and relationships entail certain rights and privileges by extension. Their prerogative also extends to the possibility of making new relationships with foreign others who go to collect the bones of their war dead.

Language matters when trying to communicate these ideas especially across linguistic and cultural barriers. Often landowners will use terms like *compensation*, *payment* or *benefit* when trying to make their claims to foreign others. But the way they articulate their demands may come across as politically incorrect, unreasonable, or unethical. As a PNG Museum officer one of my roles is to mediate between landowners and foreign human remains missions. This involves giving some awareness about PNG Museum policies and conscientious translations between spoken Tok Pisin and English in the interactions between landowners and foreign others. Sometimes on JARRWC missions there are higher chances of mistranslations or misrepresentations of meaning and intention because translations can go from *tokples* to Tok Pisin or English, to the PNG Museum officer and onto a Papua New Guinean translator of

Japanese and finally to the Japanese team leader and then back again to the landowner.

Section 3 – Concluding Remarks

The final stanza of the prefatory poem asks the question, why is it important to study the history of WWII in PNG? The poem answers that the events of WWII, destructive as they were, have afforded Papua New Guineans today a place in world history. Having a place in world history or sharing in the traumatic history of WWII with foreign others positions PNG and landowners like Keke or Sega in a global network of relationships. The question partly relates to a present and persistent issue of how people can benefit from war surplus materials (which includes the bones of the war dead) that are of more immediate value for their scrap metal price than as museum artifacts. I will address this issue in the next chapter.

As a museum officer and now a student of anthropology dealing with the history and material remains of the war, I have found it hard, even unwise and unethical, to isolate the historical and academic study of the war in PNG from local development issues and economic needs. As helpful and supportive as most of my interlocutors, both in Gorari and Tol have been, there remains a clear intention for their support to be recognized or 'rewarded' through my government networks and relevant development projects that may bring them. In many cases I have told people that my research directly informs my role as a museum officer which I will be returning to after completion of my studies. My argument here is that helping me now will put me in a better position to help them in the future. I have thrust myself into their network of relationships by promising them that they will benefit from mine later.

Questions I am often asked include: 'how can we benefit from the war surplus materials or rubbish of war?', 'Will we be compensated for the destruction caused by the war?', 'Will we be paid for the bones of soldiers we find, or will we be paid for 'looking after' the bones of these soldiers for so many years?' The next chapter tries to address some of these questions by considering some indirect ways in which an association with the materiality and history of WWII have benefited people in my two fieldsites.

Chapter 5 – The Legal and Political Lives of Bones and the Ghosts of War

Reconciliation

When you are standing at your hero's grave,
Or near some homeless village where he died,
Remember, through your heart's rekindling pride,
The German soldiers who were loyal and brave.

Men fought like brutes; and hideous things were done,
And you have nourished hatred harsh and blind.
But in the Golgotha perhaps you'll find
The mothers of the men who killed your son.

- Siegfred Sassoon, November 1918

When you are standing at your bigman's *matmat*,
Or near a former battlefield where *em i dai*,
Remember, through your hearts rekindling pride *na krai,*
For those who *bin nogat toktok lo displa fait.*

Men fought with powerful weapons *na kilim ol yet go kam stap*,
And you have nourished hatred *na em i pasim ai blo yu*.
But in the Kokoda *bai yu harim gut tru*
The cries of those in between *wok lo askim lo luksave olsem ol tu stap.*

- Gregory Bablis, March 2024

I begin with poetic prose to introduce the tenor of the proceedings, as I have done for most of my other chapters. I seize the opportunity to parody, without any accompanying humour, the style of one of the great poets of WWI, Siegfred Sassoon. The lines of my poem intentionally follow closely Sassoon's syntax and locution to fold-in the horizons of both global conflicts. I write my own lines under the same title of his 1918 poem, 'Reconciliation', for that is the broad theme of this and the previous chapter. Both world wars were global conflicts resulting from tensions in the relationships between a few powerful countries. The outbreak of war between these countries lead to a general deterioration of relations between other countries all over the world as their political, economic, and ideological connections are revealed in their chosen alliances. I do not name any countries. This is not an exposé on world history but a study of how

the ‘work of the dead’, of recovering the bones of the foreign war dead in PNG, engenders the mending of relationships and sustaining of peaceful relations among the living-living.

The tone and sentiment of the poems are a plead for empathy and understanding in the generations after the end of the wars. In the second-last line of the second stanza, I replace Sassoon’s ‘Golgotha’ with ‘Kokoda’. The Hebrew term ‘Golgotha’ or Calvary in Latin is from the term ‘calva’ meaning ‘bald head’ or ‘skull’ and translates to ‘Place of a Skull’ (Book of Matthew 27: 33). It is the hill in ancient Jerusalem where Jesus Christ was crucified to die for all the sins of the world. I draw a parallel to the placename ‘Kokoda’. As the Oro historian Maclaren Hiari explained to me, *koko* refers to skull; or the sound made by a skull when it is tossed over the side of the plateau where the government station now stands. The suffix *-da* is a common Kaiva and Kaina[44] term meaning place or village – Kokoda literally means ‘skull place’ or ‘skull village’ indicating its traditional use as a place where the skulls of enemies were kept.[45] My use of ‘battlefield’ acknowledges the deaths of soldiers in combat as sacrifices for their countries. Sassoon makes the same comparison between a soldiers sacrifice and Christ’s sacrifice with his use of ‘Golgotha’. Overall, Sassoon’s poem stresses that whether comrades or enemies, all soldiers made the same sacrifices for their countries, albeit not always willingly. The final lines of both stanzas in my poems acknowledges the collateral damage of war – of those caught in between – a throwback to Chapter 1 and the ‘mit in a sanwitch’ metaphor.

Section 1 – Political Manoeuvring for the Future

Here I want to sketch an outline of the ‘legal lives’ and ‘political lives’ of the bones, and ghosts, of the foreign war dead in the ways they relate to the living-living in the complex social milieu of PNG. The legal and political aspects of sociality are connected in many ways. A peaceful politics means law generally prevails, yet they are transposable concepts collocated on permeable margins. Verdery finds dead bodies ‘particularly good vehicles’ for thinking about politics both as strategies and manoeuvring and also as activity occurring within cultural systems (1999: 24-5). Ferea suggests six reasons for harmony and coexistence between the living-living and the living-dead in Melanesian theology (refer to chap. 3). The fourth purpose for this harmonious coexistence is to ‘cultivate peace between people and allow the community to survive politically’ (Ferea 2001: 7). Peoples’ interactions and relations with the bones of the foreign war dead and ghosts of war show how they might endeavour to place themselves in positions favourable to continuing relations with the living kin of the deceased. The tempo of these relations alternates on a need to exchange and fortify one’s own position. In the post-war era, the need to recover the corpses or bones of soldiers have become a compelling reason for such exchanges.

[44] The Kaina variant is *-ta*.

[45] Another interpretation I have recorded is that *koko* is the tok ples name for a small black bird that forewarns of impending danger or gives signal for bad news like the death of a loved one.

I will demonstrate what I mean by peoples' social maneuvering in relation to the bones of WWII dead or ghosts of war as a kind of political maneuvering for the future. In 1994 Keke unearthed the fully intact skeletal remains of a soldier wrapped in black canvas. Like in previous instances, he was digging postholes for a house in Gorari Hu hamlet. As he was digging, his spade struck the top of the skull and Keke sensed that he had hit bones. Keke explains that,

> Nau mi digim nau mi digim whole wonem ya, longpla hol nau mi chekim em na whole bodi em silip stap. Mi chekim olgeta; han, lek, olgeta mi rausim. Bun ya mi rausim olgeta. Mi putim insait lo bag nau mi putim lo haus blo mi. Fest taim mi rausim displa bun nau mi silip nau spirit blo em kam lo driman blo mi. Em yangpla boi stret, 17 yia old. Em tok ples. Em tok ples lo mipla ya. Em tok mi kam lo kisim bun. Na mi tokim em olsem mi kisim so yu bai stap wantaim mi. Mi bai lukautim yu. Okei yu tok olsem so mi lusim tasol mi yangpla boi ya, 18 o 17 yia old. Mi sore lo em na mi lukautim bun blo em. Mi promis lo man ya na em laik rausim bun blo em na mi tok nogat na yu bai stap wantaim mi bikos em olsem em spirit. Spirit blo em em stap wantaim mipla so mipla toktok igo kam nau em stap na em harim stap olsem na em kam na mi ting em bai toktok lo *tokples* blo em lo Japan tasol em *tokples* blo mipla stret. Skin blo em em Japan tasol em kam na em tok oh; gutpla yu kam so bai mi lukautim yu, yu stap wantaim mi. Mi tokim em na trangu em wanbel na em tok em orait bai mi stap wantaim yu.
>
> As I dug I unearthed a whole body. I dug a big hole and checked and indeed it was a whole body laying there. I checked every part; arms, legs; everything I unearthed. I removed all the bones. I put it all in a bag and kept it at my house. The first time after recovering the bones, I went to sleep, and the spirit appeared in my dream. He was a young boy, 17 years old. He spoke *tokples*. He spoke our *tokples*. He told me he came to get his bones. And I told him that I got them so he will stay with me. I told him I'd look after him. He agreed to what I said but reiterated that he was a young boy of only 18 or 17 years of age. I felt sorry for him, so I wanted to look after his bones. He wanted to take his bones but I promised him that I would take care of his bones because he is a spirit. His spirit was with us so whenever we (the living-living) talked he would hear it and learn it and when he came to me I thought he would speak in his own Japanese language but he spoke our *tokples* instead. His skin and physical appearance is clearly Japanese but he spoke our tongue. I told him it's good he came so I will look after him and he agreed and said he will stay with me.

Bones can be experienced both as physical items and as actual spirits, as with Keke's dreamtime encounter with the Japanese spirit. The dream is strongly associated with the bone so that the bone assumes the identity of the spirit. The Japanese spirit in Keke's dream has learned *tokples* signifying an assimilation into their cosmology. These ghosts of war have generally been adopted into the Kaina category of the *sovai* which Edrick has called on in past instances of interclan skirmishes (refer to sec. 1, chap. 3).

Yet it is apparent too that the visual appearance of the ghost retains its racial characteristics. The Japanese identity is attached to the physical remains (bones) which becomes the fulcrum to further relationships with living Japanese peoples or organisations in the future. Keke had the Japanese bones for a while but at some point, a nephew of his took the bones to his house by the

river to keep as a *was* (literally 'watch' in Tok Pisin, implying the role of a guardian, or a kind of talisman). Keke explains that,

> Narapla sonny boi ya em kam na em laik kamautim nau em kisim go daun. Kisim go daun nau em spirit blo displa man ya em kam na wokim kainkain stap lo tamblo ya. Klostu lo arere lo wara. Em wokim kainkain eksen nau em poret na em kisim displa bun em go daun… em tromoi go daun lo wara…. Nau em kam tok save lo mi na mi krosim em, wai na yu makim olsem? Samting blo ol man ol bai kam na… bihain taim ol bai kam na ol bai painim displa bun ya.

One of my nephews came and removed one part of the bone and brought it down to his house by the river. The bone/spirit displayed all kinds of actions or gesticulations (ghostly apparitions) at his house down by the river. This scared my nephew so he took the bone and threw it into the river. When he told me what he had done I scolded him, 'Why did you do that? That thing (bone) belongs to someone who will come in the future to look for that bone.

Keke knows about the war heritage of his place and that foreigners come to look for the bones of their relatives or soldiers – the Australians immediately after the war and the Japanese since the mid-1950s. Over the course of his bone-collecting mission, Nishimura for instance had become well acquainted with the people of Gorari and Waju in particular, where he had recovered around thirty-five of his comrades' remains in over two decades (Happell 2008: 147). Keke knew that by throwing away the bones, his nephew had destroyed a tangible link that could be used to further or open new relations with foreign others in the future.

In an earlier instance in 1986, Graydon Ijumi unearthed a set of bones while clearing bush to make a garden at what is now known as the Divune Mass Burial Site. He chopped down the big trees and slashed the undergrowth to make space for his plot. The cut up underscrub shriveled quickly as the sun peaked on the horizon and he set the dried vegetation alight. In the afternoon it rained and cooled the scorched soil, softening and loosening up what the sun and fire had baked mere hours before. Late in the afternoon Ijumi walked over his plot while clearing debris and found a pair of long bones on the surface. He knew these were most likely the bones of a Japanese soldier, so he reburied them and marked the spot by placing stones over it. These are the words he spoke in Kaina (written here in Tok Pisin) to the bones/spirit after he had reinterred it,

> Yu em 1942 taim wo bin kam na ol bin kilim yu dai ya, trangu yu stap igo igo na nau mi yet mi wokim gaden i kam na mi painim yu. Bihain taim ol lain blo yu ol bai kam. Ol bai kam painim yu na ol bai kam kisim yu. Olsem na mi tok save lo yu olsem, mi no save, mi stap lo bel blo mama yet o mi no kamap yet na yu bin dai. Na mi yet mi kam aut na mi kamap bikpla man na mi painim yu olsem na mi kisim yu; hau bai mi putim yu em nogat olsem na mi putim andanit lo stone ya. Yu stap lo hia okei bihain ol man blo painim yu, ol

> bai kam painim yu na ol bai kam kisim yu stret na bihain ol bai go putim yu lo wonem hap safety blo yu, yu bai yu stap long em em mi putim yu ya yu stap long hia.
>
> My dearly departed, you were killed in 1942 when the war came and you have been here ever since then until now when I myself have found you while I'm making my garden. Your people will come in the future. They will come searching for you and they will come and retrieve you. I am letting you know this, I don't know, I might have been in my mothers womb or I might not have even been born when you died. But I am here now as a grown man and I have found you so I have taken you. There is no other way for me to secure you so I am placing you under some stones. This is the best I can do so you stay here until those who are tasked with searching for you come and find you and then they will go put you in a proper place where your safety can be guaranteed.

Ijumi shows concern for the bones. He speaks of the bones' safety which suggests that the fates of the spirit and the bones are intertwined. Like Keke, Ijumi understands the connection between the bones on his land and the potential for that to bring foreign others to his land in the future. Both men acknowledge that the potential relationships in the future can benefit them and their communities. Ijumi tries to preserve this potentiality by giving the bones he found a decent enough burial, importantly making it easy for the bones to be found again.

Just one year after Ijumi found the bones a JARRWC team was in Oro following reported bone findings on the Northern Beaches and in the Kokoda area. Araho, then a young officer with the PNG Museum, was assigned to the team and Ijumi reported his findings to him. This is the same JARRWC mission I refer to in Chapter 4.

But they were not able to secure the bones because the landowners made some demands that the Japanese team could not meet. The Divune Mass Burial Site is on lands owned by the Tausuva-Ferahane Clan and their chief in 1987 was Trophian Anjeka's father, Standford. On behalf of the clan the senior Anjeka had asked for a vehicle and some large amount of money. The demands had to be met before the landowners would give access to the mass burial site and so the Japanese team were unsuccessful in retrieving the bones at Gorari.

The story of these bones has an interesting epilogue though. Thirty-eight years later there are no more big trees and no more garden plots on the mass burial site which is now under a cocoa block. It is 2022 and I was in my third week of fieldwork in Gorari. On 27 June Keke, Trophian Anjeka and I were searching for human remains in the area and we dug up a set of bones under some rocks that were submerged by a thin top layer of soil. It was a shallow grave. The rocks would have thrown me off but for some unseen rust or metallic bits that kept on setting off my metal detector. Noticing the peculiar placement and grouping of the rocks, Anjeka urged that we dig them out to look underneath. Sure enough we found a pair of partly shattered bones underneath the rocks. I took photographs and sent a report to the Japanese Embassy. Selfishly, I suggested that they try and get to Gorari while I was still in the field. My intention was to create work I can observe and to ask the Japanese team members questions during the process. I too was doing my own maneuvering. Administrative issues prevented the JARRWC team from getting to Gorari in 2022 but they did make it there in November of 2023. During their mission

the JARRWC team recovered the bones that Ijumi had first discovered in 1986. They had no problems locating it because I put the GPS coordinates for the burial spot in my report. In addition to this, they recovered skeletal remains from two other locations within the Divune Mass Burial Site.

Figure 31. Photograph of pair of Japanese bones at Divune Mass Burial Site.

This time the Japanese team were allowed to take the skeletal remains with them. While the JARRWC team were in Gorari, Anjeka took the opportunity to present a letter to them asking for help with buying housing materials for Gorari Hu. The neighbouring hamlet of Hovea took the Japanese team to an area on their lands where the Japanese Army had a makeshift field dressing station during the war. After showing them around their spokesman asked the Japanese for support to build a clinic for them on that site.

Bones become like chess pieces in the political maneuvering for future networking. In his letter to the Japanese, Anjeka asked for assistance with housing materials for his clan only. His position as a bigman in his clan took priority over his official position as the Ward Secretary. Hovea Hamlet's request for assistance is likewise more insular. They asked the Japanese for a clinic to be built on their land to reflect and acknowledge that the Japanese Army had what would have been a makeshift field dressing station, but what the locals refer to as a hospital, on the same land during the war. My interlocutors in Hovea inform me that the Japanese have agreed to meet their request for a clinic. There are no human remains on that site but the war

surplus materials there are consistent with the hospital narrative.[46] This materiality of the war, in lieu of any bones, also become the focus of local maneuvering to benefit from potential future relations with foreign others. What they fear is that foreign others come and remove their bones without any acknowledgement of the destruction of the war or the perceived relations that villagers have with the bones/spirits of the war dead as long-time hosts and caretakers of the bones. Such bone recovery work by foreign governments is also genuinely seen as alternative development opportunities that can benefit local communities if done properly. These are opportunities for people to establish or begin relationships and flows of wealth.

My interlocutors in Tol also speak of adventitiously excavating bones when digging postholes for houses or when gardening. For instance, refer to Section 2, Chapter 3 for the case of Samo digging up the lower jaw of a skull when digging a posthole while constructing his house at the Sulka settler village of Gumgum.

Kolu Sylvester is another Sulka interlocutor of mine who has settled in Tol. He followed his parents across from the other side of Wide Bay in the early 2000s and has lived there ever since. His parents were drawn by the opportunities of the government station and the growing oil palm industry on the eastern side of the bay. His father now works as a general shop assistant in one of the retail outlets managed by the Malaysian oil palm company, Tzen Niugini. The family's semi-permanent house is on the foreshore of the central part of the station not two hundred meters away from the small wharf and adjacent to Kavon's residence where I stayed throughout my time in Tol.

When I began my fieldwork in April of 2021, Sylvester had been courting a young Tolai woman, Christine, for a while. He is primarily a subsistence farmer and still partially dependent on his parents, but he and Christine started their own garden when she fell pregnant. The shoreline from the wharf to the small promontory called Malan Point, is lined with the semi-permanent houses of mainly Sulka and Mengen settlers. Most of them maintain gardens on lands immediately behind their houses.

On Wednesday 26 May 2021 Sylvester and Christine went to their garden early in the morning. They had a temporary garden house and spent most of their time there to give them more privacy and a sense of independence from Sylvester's parents and siblings. He was also in the process of upgrading the garden house to a more permanent domicile for his growing family. May is rainy season in Wide Bay so the young couple were planting *kaukau* which takes three to four months to be ready.

As he was digging, Sylvester hit something with his spade. He heard a skull cracking at the moment his spade impacted it, breaking in the top part of the cranium. He was not sure at first what he hit but knew enough of the areas wartime history to be reasonably sure that he had struck skeletal matter. He stopped his gardening and immediately reported the find to Kavon who went and carefully cleared enough soil around the object of interest to be able to confirm that Sylvester had indeed found skeletal remains in his garden.

[46] I visited and documented this site in 2018.

I returned to Tol a few days later from Milim where I had spent a few days with Geso. I excavated the bones and it turned out to be the full remains of a single individual. I exposed the corpse enough to make out its orientation and photograph it for my report. I then covered it with shade cloth and a thin layer of soil and marked off with rope a one-meter perimeter around the corpse.

The people of Tol know well the wartime history of the area. Even if they do not know in detail the events of WWII, the unearthing of bones by graders clearing roads or people digging drains to lay water pipes over successive stages of development in the decade's preceding WWII is a constant reminder of the scale of death brought on by the war. The soil they till to plant gardens or dig to erect their houses often reveal bones or other war surplus materials like soldier's dog tags, bullets, guns, helmets and the like.

The Tol Plantation Massacre is a dark moment in Australian military history not only because of the war atrocity perpetrated against them by the Japanese Army but also because it revealed the failure of their own government to send rescue for soldiers who had been left to defend Rabaul. The War Cabinet in Canberra had decided in January of 1942 not to send rescue for soldiers who had fled Rabaul and were making their way to Tol in Wide Bay.

The killings were carried out along the three kilometre stretch of coastline between Masarau, where the logging camp is today, and Malan Point. Immediately after the war the Australian Army made a temporary cemetery at what is today Gumgum Village but were not able to recover all the remains of their soldiers. The corpses they managed to recover in 1945 have since been reinterred at Bitapaka Commonwealth War Cemetery. The central hub of stores, offices and the residential dwellings of settlers and their gardens is particularly dense with bones as local accounts attest to.

Because most locals know of the wartime history of the place, upturned bones are often assumed to be either Japanese or Australian remains, although the story of the Tol Plantation Massacre and certainly the longer colonial history of ENBP would suggest that more Australians were likely to have been killed in Tol. I too was inclined to believe that the individual in Sylvester's garden was Australian and this reflected in my report to the UWC-ADF. I did not send a report to JARRWC.

Figure 32. Photograph of the corpse Sylvester found in his garden. The legs have folded in under its own body.

Sylvester found the body on a Wednesday morning and that same night was visited by a spirit he tells me was the dead person he disturbed in his garden. While asleep his body became heavy and immobile. Sylvester recounts that,

> Mi silip na lukim lo driman olsem tutak kam insait lo haus. Haus em open speis tasol na dua lo front kam insait lo aria blo silip. Mi lukim olsem tutak blo man kam insait lo hap we mi silip na taim em kam insait em skin blo mi go hevi na mi hat lo muv. Mi pilim poret na mi traim singaut tasol nogat nois i kam arasait lo maus blo mi. Monin mi kirap nau mi stori lo meri blo mi na em tok em mas spirit blo displa bun yu painim ya.
>
> When I fell asleep I saw in my dream that darkness came into the house. The inside of the house is just an open space with a main door leading into the sleeping area. I saw that the darkness of a man came into where I was sleeping and when it did my body became heavy and I could not move. I felt afraid and I tried to shout but no noise came out of my mouth. In the morning I woke up and told my wife about my dream and she said that it must be the spirit of the bones that I had dug up.

The ‘darkness of a man’ that Sylvester talks about is a similar apparition to the three lanky shadowy figures I encountered at Etoa (refer to sec. 1, chap. 4). Such visitants can appear in ambiguous form and it may be up to the person to seek out the identity of the spirit or interpret the meaning of the dream, like I did at Etoa. Sylvester had his dream on the night of the day he found the corpse so there was no doubt in his mind that it was the spirit of the persons corpse. I asked him, rather narrowly, if he thought the corpse was that of an Australian or Japanese. In hindsight I realise the absurdity of my question, giving only two possible options. Yet Sylvester’s answer is genuine and revealing. He simply said, ‘Mi no save. (I don’t know)’. All he could say for sure was that the spirit he encountered in his dream was from the bone or body he found. He

added that he asked Christine what she thought, and she suggested that the person was a local since the figure was black – a bit of a literal interpretation.

The very next thing Sylvester did in the morning after telling his wife about the dream was go to his garden and speak to the bones/spirit. In Tok Pisin he told the spirit that they were now co-residents and that this is their place where they must live together. Sylvester appealed to the spirit not to visit him and scare him anymore. He marked the grave by planting *tanget*s on the four corners of the plot and he ceased gardening in the spot. After that he has stopped experiencing ghostly encounters.

Not one hundred meters away from Sylvester's garden, another Sulka settler found skeletal remains while working in her garden. Antonia Pate has a sizeable garden plot and grows a variety of crops like corn, watermelon, peanut, lettuce, tomato, papaya and so on. Some of these she sells and some she keeps for household consumption. Pate is a subsistence farmer and is self-employed. She and her husband have a banana boat that ferries passengers between Wide Bay and Kokopo; she has a small canteen beside the wharf that sells store goods; and she also sells fuel.

The surface scatter around her garden is significant. Over the years she has upturned many war surplus materials from the soil which she keeps piles of on the fringes of her garden. The unmistakable semi-circle shaped shoe heels; bits of leather from the toe box, quarter and counter of soldiers' boots; spent and unspent Lee Enfield .303 rifle rounds; Swiss army knives; and bayonets are just some of the things I saw around her garden.

Pate has found several soldiers' dog tags too which she keeps at her house. I asked her why she keeps the dog tags and she said,

> 'Displa em mi save olsem ol soldia bin werim lo nek na igat namba blo ol stap antap lo em so mi kipim bikos mi save olsem ol lain blo ol bai laikim kain samting taim ol kam lo painim bun blo ol.
>
> I know that soldiers wore these on their necks and it has their numbers on it so I kept them [the dog tags] because I know that their people will want such things when they come to look for their bones'.

Indeed, she told me that on many occasions Australian visitors have solicited her for the dog tags. She often refuses to sell them but once conceded to a persistent Australian man who gave her K100 for one of her dog tags. I asked her why she did not want to sell the items. She replied that,

> 'Mi tingting lo kipim na usim lo pulim ol waitman o turist i kam lo lukim. Gaden blo mi tu pulap lo ol samting blo wo so mi laik wokim olsem display na ol bai kam lukim.
>
> I'm thinking about keeping them and use them to attract white people or tourists to come and see them. My garden is full of things from the war so I want to do a display and they can come and see it'.

When in late December of 2021 Pate upturned skeletal remains while working in her garden, she

had no doubt in her mind that she had found the owner of one of the many dog tags in her collection. I excavated the skeletal remains a few days later, on 4 January 2022. The bones were not in as good condition or as fully intact as the ones in Sylvester's garden but the number of bones made it seem like there were more than one individual in the burial spot. Pate told me that she had found some of the dog tags near the location of the bones.

I have been able to trace only one dog tag on the Australian War Memorial (AWM) online database: VX18452 Smith, R. L. who was attached to the No. 28 Battery, 2/14 Field Regiment.

Figure 33. Photograph of dog tags Pate keeps in her house. The one indicated by the red circle belongs to a Smith, R. L.

According to military records, Smith and his regiment were serving in Alexishafen, Madang Province in 1944 (AWM 2023, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C65514>) so it is unlikely that he was a victim of the Tol Plantation Massacre. His regiment did serve in the Tol and Waitavolo area in February of 1945 (AWM 2023, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C79133>) so it is plausible that he was killed later in the war. The other possibility is that Smith and the other owners of the dog tags simply misplaced or discarded their dog tags while stationed in Tol and are not MIA or KIA at all. These are all speculations I wrote in my report to the UWC-ADF and strongly suggested that the remains in Pate's garden were Australian. However, for Pate, the dog tags alone are evidence enough that the bones too are Australian.

Based on my reporting of the skeletal remains in Sylverster and Pate's gardens, the UWC-ADF organised for a recovery mission to Wide Bay in August of 2022. By that time I was already a few months into my fieldwork in Oro but they flew me over to ENBP for the one week mission to check and possibly recover the remains. We all met up and mobilised in Kokopo on 23 August and then drove down to Tol the next day – a six to seven hours drive. We stayed the next two nights at Kavon's guesthouse.

In the years leading up to the global pandemic Kavon has hosted a number of foreign human remains recovery missions, including UWC-ADF and DPAA teams, so he was known to the team members already. But his business struggled ever since, so part of my personal motivations was to repay Kavon for all he had done for me by creating these kinds of legitimate business opportunities. The one-week recovery mission was an opportunity for me to make observations of the work and to talk more with my interlocutors and ask them about their interactions with the bones/spirits.

The 24th of August was our first full day excavating the two sites in Sylvester and Pate's gardens. Each of them was hired to help excavate the skeletal remains in their own gardens and were paid a days' wage. I accompanied and worked closely with the teams lead archaeologist. We worked in Sylvester's garden first and the archaeologist quickly determined, from the shape of the skull and length of the bones that the individual was not Caucasian. She also ruled out the possibility of the bones being Japanese and suggested that the individual was a local. This seemed odd to Kavon and others mainly because of the shallow depth at which the bones were found. Despite the UWC-ADF officer's assessment, Kavon insists that the individual is not a Papua New Guinean because a local would also have other accompanying items buried with the body. For instance, he asserts that there is no evidence around the corpse of any *paspas* (Tok Pisin term for traditional armlets). Some Sulka armlets are carved from shell and worn around the biceps. These shell armlets are hard and like bone or pig tusks which would remain a long time in the soil. It is conceivable too that the fragments of the coffin or the material that would have been used to wrap the body with may have been found if it were a local. Kavon further suggests that the orientation of the body, with its legs folded in under itself suggests an untimely death and is an unusual way of burying a person, especially post-missionisation.

In any case, the UWC-ADF closed the site and moved on to Pate's garden. There the lead archaeologist determined the presence of at least two individuals and that there was a high chance they were both Australian. With Pate's consent, we bagged the remains for the team to take to Australia for DNA testing.

On the evening of 24 August, I sat with Sylvester in the new *hauswin* Kavon constructed in the months since I had left Tol. It serves as the kitchen and dining area for his guests. We had been working under the hot sun all day so were enjoying the contrasting cool night and a hot cup of coffee. We discussed the events of the day and Sylvester was not at all surprised that the archaeologist had determined the individual in his garden to be a local. He did question though how the corpse could be local when just a short distance away, in Pate's garden, there were likely two Australian soldiers. I probed Sylvester further about what he would now do with the remains. He told me that immediately after we had moved on to work in Pate's garden, he made a more permanent grave plot by outlining it with *karanas*. He stated that,

> Bai mi nonap wokim gaden lo displa hap nau. Em bai haus nau, ples nau. Em olsem em bai ples na em bai stap insait lo ples na bai mi lukautim em na bai yumi stap wantaim. But mi no save em husait. Em Sulka or Baining o Morobe o em wanpla wokman blo plenteisen bifo ol kilim o. At list olsem em stap wantaim spirit blo em lo displa hap na em

> stap nau. Nogut bai yumi rausim bodi tasol go na spirit em bai stap yet lo displa hap. Olsem mi tok tasol ah.
>
> I will cease making my garden in that particular spot. It will become a house or a village of sorts that the bones/spirit will reside in and I will look after it and we will stay together. But I do not know who it is. Is the person a Sulka or Baining or Morobean or if it is a plantation worker that was killed years ago. At least the spirit is settled there and it will now stay there. We might remove the body but the spirit may still stay on in the area. That is just what I am thinking.

I pushed further with my line of questioning, 'Sapos yu rausim bodi ya lo go planim lo narapla hap, olsem sapos yu save stret olsem em bodi blo ol Sulka, hau bai yu makim? (If you were to remove the body to go bury it somewhere else, if you knew for sure that it is a Sulka body for instance, how would you do that?)' He replied that,

> Sapos mi tingting lo rausim [bodi] em kuk tasol. Kukim kaikai tasol na ol [lain blo mi] go stap kaikai, mipla wokim liklik toktok nau mipla karim em go planim em lo narapla hap. But lo displa nau ya em mipla no save em husait so mi bai painim tingting nau olsem bai mi go planim em lo wer. Nogut bai mi go planim em lo aria blo wanpla man ken ya. Nogut bai ol narapla lain ya koros lo mi o bai spirit ya koros lo mi o. Olsem na tingting wok lo kam strong olsem bai mi larim em stap lo hap wer em nau stap lo gaden blo mi. Greg, mi lukim olsem bai mi nonap kukim bun tu. Bai mi mas larim em stap olsem nau. Mi go antap [lo haus] na Kristin askim mi na mi tokim em olsem em ino waitman, em wanpla blekman ya – but blekman na yumi no save em wonem kain man. Olsem na bai yumi nonap rausim, bai yumi larim tasol na yumi wokim ples na planim flawa raunim na larim. Em skelim tu na tok olsem em orait bai yumi larim em stap olsem tasol nau.
>
> If I were to remove the body I would just need to cook. Cook some food and gather some of my relatives to share in the food and then speak some words to the deceased and then bring the bones/spirit to be reinterred elsewhere. But in this case we do not know who the person is so I am lost as to where I would rebury the bones at. I might go and rebury the bones in someone else's area and those other people might get mad at me or the spirit might get mad at me. That is why now I am of the strong opinion that I have to leave the bones/spirit where it is now located in my garden. Greg, I will not even burn the bones. It looks like I must now leave the bones/spirit as it is. I went up to the house and even asked Christine, telling her that the bones are not of a white persons, and that it is a black persons – but that we do not know where exactly the person is from. That is why we cannot remove it, we have to leave it as it is and beautify the place by planting flowers around it and maintaining the site. She considered the situation and agreed too that we must leave the bones/spirit as it is.

Sylvester has inadvertently become caught up in a predicament caused by a virtually unknown corpse in his garden. Unclaimed by the Australians, likely not American or Japanese, and no way of finding out which local tribe the deceased was from, he has resigned to maintaining the grave himself and cohabitating the area with the bones/spirit.

I will make some extrapolated observations given Sylvester's considerations of how to deal

with the unknown corpse. In a Melanesian way of thinking, burial sites are important markers of oral histories surrounding migration, settlement, and landownership (cf. MacIntyre 1983: 28-30; Stasch 2009: 30). Given the contentious nature of the Tol Station lands, Sylvester is highly cognizant of how he will manage the corpse in his garden.

The land that Sylvester, Kavon and others have settled on is technically owned by the Government who have a title for the section of land. The Baining Tribe, primarily the Mali Clan in the east and the Simbali Clan in the west, have an ongoing court case since the 1960s against the Provincial Government over their claim of ownership to the land, citing archival documents indicating that the first payment for the land was made to their forefathers in 1918 by an Australian plantation owner.[47] They are disputing the Government's usurpation of the former plantation lands after its last title holder, Engelbert Schmidt passed away in 2011. The neighbouring Sulka Tribe also have a long-running dispute with the Baining over ownership of the area, citing for instance toponyms such as Malan and Sibinai (refer to sec. 2, chap. 3) which are known Sulka *masalais*. The Sulka-Baining tensions over their borderlands in fact span hundreds of years. The Nambatu Tribe are closely related to the Sulka and often support their rivalries against the Baining. They have another connection to Tol Government Station because the former MP for Pomio District, Paul Tiensten, is a Mengen man and initiated the upgrading of the rural outstation to a Growth Centre. He has a permanent house at the tip of Malan Point and during his terms in Parliament between 2002 and 2012 many Mengens came to settle in Tol.

Tensions spurring from these overlaying claims of landownership and rights to land use and settlement have often broken out into skirmishes between the tribes which I have witnessed firsthand while living in Tol. Sylvester was thus cautious about doing a *kastam* for an unidentified corpse which could potentially be misread by other tribes as a claim to the land. He was equally cautious about incinerating a corpse that could easily be Baining or Mengen and risk their scrutiny if in the future others were able to make a connection to it. The social implications on his future safety and peaceful settlement seemed to rest a lot on the decision he made with regards to the corpse in his garden. Considering all these factors, Sylvester made the best possible decision for himself – to care for the bones/spirit by maintaining the grave in his garden. If in the future, others were indeed able to make a connection with the bones/spirit then it would leave the door open for Sylvester to further social relations with them.

It matters where corpses are buried because graves can be used to claim a connection to land or to claim user rights to land. Graves can also be a hindrance to development when delays are caused by the logistics and cultural protocols necessary to exhuming and reburying a body elsewhere. Tol Government Station has no cemetery though land was allocated for one behind Gumgum where the temporary Australian war grave was in 1945 (refer to the Map of Tol Growth Centre Proposed Planning Zones below). The nearby Baining and Sulka villages have their own graves and on a few occasions settlers from other parts of PNG or from villages further afield from Wide Bay have sought burial space for their dead there. Anyone who wants to bury their dead in Tol must first seek the approval of Baining leaders. For instance, Tiensten had to secure

[47] Patrol Reports, East New Britain District, Pomio, 1967 – 1968, by Davies, M. indicates that a Mr. George Nease (? Spelling unclear) bought Tol from Burakei, the Luluai of Bulus Village.

the approval of Baining leaders before burying his late father on their block of land at Malan Point.

Schmidt who was the last plantation manager and land title holder before the Government began processes to claim the land has a house that still stands in the middle of the station area. The house is now occupied by his adopted son, a Sulka man, and his family. Schmidt's second wife was a Baining woman who still lives at the nearby village of Bulus. Before he passed away, Schmidt's wish was to be buried in Tol so Baining leaders allowed his corpse to be interred behind his house when he passed away in 2011.

Sulka settlers at Koki and Gumgum usually repatriate their dead to their villages around Wide Bay for burial but I noted at least two cases while I was living in Tol where the dead were buried at Koki near their places of residence. There are earlier instances like the migrant worker, known only as Sini, from the Sulka village of Klampun on the southwestern shores of Wide Bay. He died around 1973 or 1974 after a short illness. Despite the grim topic, my Sulka interlocutors retell this story with much hilarity. Sini was gravely ill and was written off for dead but took so long to stop breathing. His co-workers became increasingly impatient because his death would clash with a scheduled *kastam* organised for that day by the plantation manager at the time. To avoid Sini's death interfering with the *kastam*, his co-workers buried him while he was still breathing and hid the fact of his death from the plantation manager. Sini's grave is marked only by a thicket of *tanget*s growing on the foreshore adjacent to the high school. My interlocutors tell me that Sini has living relatives in Klampun.

All these corpses will presumably have to be reinterred elsewhere if Baining landowners recall their land or government developments require the land space in the future.

The unidentified local corpse in Sylvester's garden leaves a lot of unanswered questions. Was the person killed during WWII and if so, what was the context in which the person met his or her demise? If the corpse is indeed of a local deceased who died during WWII, then whose responsibility is it to care for the local unknown war dead? If the person was a native soldier in the Australian Army then is it now the responsibility of the PNG Government or is it the responsibility of the former colonial power? For instance, some native Papuan and New Guinean soldiers who were killed while serving in the PIB or NGIB are buried at the Commonwealth warcemeteries. There are 19 indigenous PIB and NGIB soldiers interred at Bitapaka and 9 are listed as missing in action on Panel No. 33 of the memorial space. The skeletal remains of these 9 native soldiers lie on one of the former battlefield areas around New Britain including, possibly Tol. Thirty-eight native soldiers of the PIB and NGIB are interred at Bomana.[48] It begs the question of the PNG Government's commitment to identifying and consoling the spirits and memory of its own WWII dead.

Commemorating the memory of the war has been a consideration of local authorities in Tol for some time. Apart from the high number of bones that are upturned around the station, other

[48] I have not been able to confirm yet how many native soldiers are buried at Lae Commonwealth War Cemetery, if indeed there are any.

temporal landmarks keep the eighty-year-old conflict in focus. Infrastructure from WWII that have been built on top of include the current layout of roads within the station, the now disused airstrip in the middle of the station, and the numerous Japanese tunnels that line the overlooking ridge. The wreck of a Japanese Zero lies in the bush beside the airstrip and not three hundred meters away is a memorial cairn and sign commemorating the Lark Force soldiers who were executed by the Japanese Army.

Figure 34. Photograph of the small memorial park in the station centre. The cement sign reads, 'Welcome to Tol 2/22 Lark Force War Memorial Park'. Memorial space created by the 2/22 Battalion Lark Force Association in 1987.

Figure 35. Memorial plaque and cairn erected in 1987.

When I spoke with Isidor Tiensten, the Station Manager of Tol, he indicated that expanding on what is already there in the memorial park is an important part of their vision of developing the town space. I met with him just days after arriving in Tol in April of 2021. The Station Managers residence is a permanent high-post house made of modern materials. It is surrounded by fencing and is a stark contrast to Schmidt's dilapidated old house right next to it. The houses are in the centre of the station and the road leading in crosses right in front of the two houses and another modern house where the manager of the Tzen Niugini shop resides. On the other side of the road, facing these three houses is the memorial park that is overgrown with grass and weeds most of the year until a commemorative event necessitates it cleaning.

Identifying with the history and memory of WWII is integral to how foreign others, importantly for Tol, investors and not just tourists, might be attracted to the area. Isidor shared with me the plan that the former Pomio MP, his younger brother Paul, had years ago. The memorial park was to be enlivened with a new centrepiece and a museum. The museum would display the cultural accoutrements of the different tribes of Pomio and the history of colonialism, missionisation, the plantation history, WWII, PNG's independence and then post-independence – showing the kind of stone age to modern age progression that the Tiensten's had in mind for their

budding utopia. As the former Assistant Manager of Tol Station, Kavon shared his ideas about the proposed museum,

> Tingting blo mi bin lo putim musium lo hap wer memorial i stap. Em bai make moa sens lo em stap klostu lo hap wer ol lain blo ol yet bin sanapim memoriol blo ol. Ol lain blo ol sa stil kam lo displa memoriol pak lo komemoratim stori blo ol lo wo so yumi putim musium lo hap tu bai ol i ken kam same taim na lukim ol atifekts na stori blo wo. Same taim yumi mas putim sampla stori blo koloniel histori, misin histori na plentesen tu lo wonem ol Jemen na ol narapla kantri tu bin kam na lusim hanmak blo ol lo hia so yumi mas pulim ol tu lo kam lo luk save lo histori blo ol lo hia. Ol tumbuna stori na kastam samting blo olgeta tribe blo Pomio tu bai yumi putim insait lo displa musium so taim ol narapla lain kam bai ol ken lainim tu histori blo yumi yet.
>
> My idea was to put the museum where the memorial now is. It would make more sense for it to be near to where their own people (the Australian Army) established their memorial. Their people still come to the memorial park to commemorate their story of the war so we must put our museum there too so they can come and see the artifacts and story of the war. At the same time, we must showcase the story of the colonial history, missionary history, and the plantations too because the Germans and other countries have also left their 'handmarks' (memories/stories) here so we must also entice them here to acknowledge their historical connections with us. We will put the traditional stories and cultural artifacts of all the tribes of Pomio in this museum too so when the others come they can learn about our traditional histories.

Kavon's idea was a kind of heritage diplomacy initiated by creating shared historical heritage, in this case the traumatic story of WWII that already draws many *narapla lain* – other people or foreign others – which he uses in this context to refer to Australian veterans and war bereaved families. Constructing a shared memory of the past is an important part of statecraft but is challenging when the development needs of the present orients peoples' heritage sensibilities differently – what aspects of their heritage should they preserve versus what they should exploit. The value of the history of the Tol Plantation Massacre is asymmetrical in that its significance is unequal in the national narratives of war between PNG and Australia. That is to say that the significance is greater for Australians than it is for Papua New Guineans, and the same can be said of the Kokoda Track and its wartime heritage. Beaumont describes these as 'extra-territorial' heritage in which,

> … those who value it most, and feel an emotional 'ownership' of it, have none of the controls and means of protection normally afforded by national legislation and political processes. Hence, the conservation of the heritage depends on two factors: intergovernmental diplomacy and the construction of some elements of shared memory of the past between the host country and the external 'owners' (2016: 355-6).

For people like Kavon and Keke this is a positive situation because it affords them opportunities to bring development to their areas.

The Tiensten's had plans for a stadium and a sports field, a golf course, hotels, park areas, foreshore reserve areas, a town cemetery among other amenities and government facilities. An

eponymous Tol Lodge was planned to cover all of Malan Point where Paul now has a permanent house. The wharf was to be upgraded to cater for the large cruise ships they hoped would come to Wide Bay from their usual trips to Simpson Harbour in Rabaul. They wanted Tol to be a tourist destination with culture and history, particularly the history of WWII, as major drawcards. They were modelling Tol to be a smaller but better version of the provincial centres of Rabaul and Kokopo.

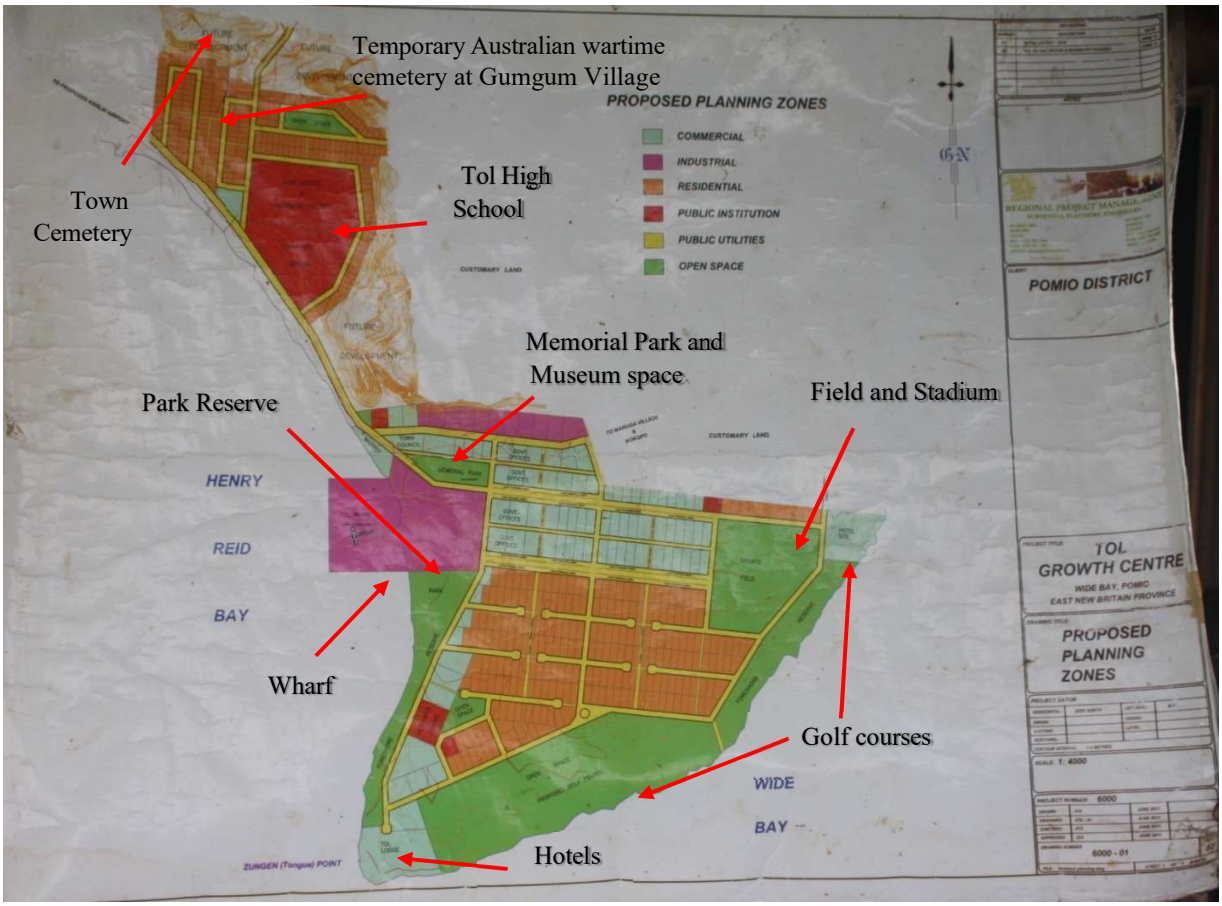


Figure 36. Map of Tol Growth Centre Proposed Planning Zones.

Kavon knows the importance of creating affective links with the wartime history of Tol and through that establishing important international relationships. He has had the most success with this as Board Chairman of the local high school. Through recognition of the high school's name, Kavon established a sister relationship with Tallarook Primary School in Victoria, Australia, near where the 2/22 Battalion had a training base in the war period. The school's twinning program was struck on the back of a personal relationship between Kavon and the son of a Lark Force veteran who survived the Tol Plantation Massacre. That veteran's son is Tony Webster who became acquainted with Kavon in 2015 when he went to Tol to shoot a Channel 7 News story on the massacre. In his comments on the news Webster implores,

> They were fighting on this land under an Australian flag so I would just hope that we can honour them. As a government (of Australia) I think we can do more. I'd like to see a plaque with the names of all of those who were killed here at Tol as some sort of recognition.

It should be noted that the Bitapaka Commonwealth War Cemetery in Rabaul has a memorial with the names of soldiers MIA or KIA in ENBP and whose bodies are unaccounted for. Yet bereaved and aggrieved family members like Webster still call for their government to do something on the massacre site itself, their extra-territorial heritage. This is one way for them to properly honour the memories and sacrifices of their loved ones.

The connection for the veteran's son is deeper, as Tony himself explains,

> The connection goes a little bit further for me personally because my middle names are Walter Leslie Norman and that's named after Norm who lies in front of me here (at Bitapaka Commonwealth War Cemetery) and Les and Wal who are on the Wall.

Tony's father, Corporal Hugh Webster, named him after three of his mates who did not survive the massacre. As Tony points out in his news interview, Private Norman Walkley is buried at Bitapaka but Private Walter Whittle and Lance Corporal Leslie Whittle are listed on the memorial panels for the KIA at Bitapaka. Walter and Leslie's physical remains still lay somewhere around Tol.

When Tony Webster returned to Australia after his 2015 visit, he and Kavon remained in contact over email and Facebook. Some of their discussions were about ways of strengthening the relationship between Tol and Lark Force veterans and bereaved families. This relationship has led to a regular flow of charitable donations of school resources being sent from Australia to Tol. Donated items range from books, computers, sports equipment, mattresses, bunk beds, clothes and so on. Apart from Tallarook Primary School, the network of people and NGOs in Australia donating to St Paul's 2/22 Battalion Tol High School has increased meaning more container shipments are being sent each year to the Wide Bay area. The catchment area for these donations has increased so a few other surrounding schools, including at primary and elementary levels, have also been included as recipients.

Kavon and I often discussed the vision and ideas he espoused as a public servant – when he was Assistant Station Manager between 2015 and 2019. He notes that when Paul Tiensten was still the Pomio MP he directed more government resources to developing Tol as the centre of Pomio District. Palmalmal Station in Jacquinot Bay had been the administrative centre of the district since before independence when Koriam was the MHA (refer chap. 2). But when Tiensten lost the Pomio seat to Elias Kapavore, the focus shifted back to Palmalmal[49] so a lot of their plans for Tol remained unfulfilled. Kavon became disillusioned with the stagnation of the Tol Growth Centre development plans and resigned from his position in 2019 to venture into private business interests, primarily his guesthouse. Still, he maintains an interest in the administrative affairs of Tol Station and displays an impressive aptitude for making personal and professional connections with foreign others through the history of WWII.

[49] Kapavore is a Mamusi man and Palmalmal is closer to his village.

Kavon has served as Board Chairman of the St Paul's 2/22 Battalion Tol High School since March of 2020. The school is run by the Catholic Education Agency and was established in 2015. Fast expanding its building infrastructures, it now boasts two double-story duplex classrooms, a staffroom/administrative building, teachers' houses, two girls' dormitories, a boys' dormitory, and an assembly hall. A quadraplex to accommodate living quarters for more teachers, a library building, another duplex dormitory, and a double story science lab are currently under construction. These have all been made possible through funding from the Government and the Catholic Church. The high school has grades 9 and 10 and will soon be upgrading to secondary status to include grades 11 and 12.

Upon its establishment in 2017 the high school was given the lengthy official name it now bears – St Paul's 2/22 Battalion Tol High School. The schools even longer colloquial name includes the nickname of the 2/22 Battalion – Lark Force. The name firstly acknowledges the Catholic Churches' role in supporting the idea of having a school in the Wide Bay area so that students do not have to go to Rabaul or further south to Palmalmal Secondary School. Following the Catholic tradition of adopting a patron saint for any institution, St Paul was chosen. It was also strongly felt that the war history of the place should be acknowledged. During one of our usual dinner conversations I asked Kavon why naming the school after the Lark Force Battalion was so important. He responded in English that,

> The massacre took place almost 80 years ago and since then Tol has been forgotten. The Australian Government have forgotten about it and the PNG Government have forgotten about it and they have forgotten about us in Tol. Tol was forgotten, but we must not let it be forgotten for the sake of the families of the soldiers that were killed here and for the sake of our local people who were killed here or were affected in other ways by the war. To honour them all and make sure they are not forgotten, the high school was named after the 2/22nd Battalion. We are proud to have that name which moves the school ahead with its development goals.

The decision to name the high school after the 2/22 Battalion rests on the cusp of a tension between remembering and forgetting. Australian veterans and bereaved family members fear their government will forget the sacrifices of their loved ones and so they must find ways to keep those memories in focus. Naming the school after the ill-fated members of the Australian battalion makes the school a temporal landmark of the events of the war fostering a constant ritual of remembering within the school. The exchanges that happen between Australian donors and their recipients in Tol are acts of remembering. Writing of the significance of names, Moutu notes in the Iatmul context that names survive the death of each individual bearer and live on (2013: 160). A name carries on the life and memory of a person or an event even after they have passed on.

For the people of Tol, being forgotten by the government implies their governments failure to deliver basic services and other development projects. The attention that Tol High School has received from foreign others connected to the events commemorated by their name have progressed their institutional goals in terms of educational resources for students, reading materials, access to computers, sports equipment and so on. This relationship has been so successful and advantageous for them that they have even given a new primary school the same

name – 2/22 Battalion Tol Primary School. A four-in-one classroom has already been built next to the high school and is being used by the Early Childhood levels. The primary school grades are set to begin in 2025.

For Kavon the naming of the high school was strategic and intentional to initiate relations with Australian partners and engender various kinds of exchanges. In 2017, he was part of the three-man committee that chose to acknowledge the wartime history of Tol by including the name of the Lark Force Battalion. For Australian veterans and war-bereaved families the naming of the high school as such is an important acknowledgement of the Lark Force soldiers unfortunate demise and sacrifice. Kavon knows the kinds of connections that can be made by a heritage diplomacy stemming from a shared wartime history and has played the role of mediating and amplifying these relations quite successfully for the high school.

Section 2 – The Legal Lives of Bones and the Ghosts of War

Two frames of thought model my following discussions. One is the cold secular web of laws and government policies that regulate the work of recovering the war dead and the other is the moral and emotional economy of kith and kin. The former facilitates this work across international borders; the latter is the thrust behind this ongoing work and is generally shaped by religion and culture. Corpses and bones, like the living-living, technically cannot be owned or sold but unlike any other inanimate object, bones bear the vicissitude of life and death, of the dead but still present (in the bones and on paper), and of the unseen spirit/soul and the physical remains that impinge on our personal and national sensibilities. Laws deal only with one side of this divide, but my work brings into consideration the influence of the non-corporeal. For instance, if a noncitizen dies in US uniform, they can be awarded citizenship posthumously. Surviving spouse and children would then be eligible for certain immigration rights and benefits, meaning the dead are playing a very active role in the legal relationship of the living-living to the State (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2024).[50]

Something must also be said about the 'identity' of the bones as that relates to notions of citizenship and ownership of the bones. Physical remains may have an identity imposed on them as determined by the associated spirit that is encountered. In the vignettes involving Keke and Ijumi, both men acknowledge that the bones belong somewhere else or to someone else and that these people would come for them in the future. The otherness of the bones or physical remains is recognized even if the spirit is assimilated locally. Identity of bones can be vicariously determined through the living-living. Keke's encounter with the Japanese spirit in his dream identifies the bones he dug up as being a Japanese soldier. The JARRWC team then recovered the leg bones from one of their known WWII burial sites. As usual a physical anthropologist was

[50] See also https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/our-history/overview-of-agency-history/military-naturalization- during-wwii on 'Military Naturalization During WWII' and https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/new- citizen-soldiers-naturalization on 'New Citizen Soldiers: Naturalization During World War II'.

on hand to provide a visual assessment of bones and later DNA testing would prove conclusively the race of the deceased individual. Determining ethnicity of bones plays into the sense of origin, identity, and citizenship, especially if DNA testing can provide a name for the deceased individual.

The DPAA, UWC-ADF and JARRWC have no policies that grant bones citizenship of their originating countries, yet they work under the assumption that the deceased individuals they are searching for never lost their citizenship including certain rights afforded only to citizens, like retrieving them from a crisis zone in a foreign country, flying them back home and giving them a proper burial. For instance, Daniel Kosasa, a historian currently working with the DPAA states that,

> There is no US government policy specifically pertaining to the citizenship of the bones belonging to American citizens. However, there *are* policies and positions that imply the citizenship of the bones belonging to deceased Americans in that Americans cannot have their citizenship stripped from them. Indeed, if you look at the return of the dead program statutes, it does not address or contemplate that a person would lose their US citizenship upon death. It does allow that the remains of people, who had an association with another country, could be transported to that country for burial after the war. So, a naturalized US citizen born in Sweden could be transported to Sweden for burial at US government expense if the family so chose. The deceased soldier would still be a US citizen even though buried in Sweden. Further, as stated above, a US citizen, by the right of birth in the US, cannot be stripped of their citizenship regardless of what heinous acts they might commit. So, US citizen soldiers whose remains are the subject of this inquiry would not lose their citizenship when they died (Kosasa, personal communication 2024).

Kosasa's response highlights that citizenship is an inalienable right. Even in death, one's skeletal remains retains its citizenship. The right to it is so fundamental that policy and law does not even contemplate the possibility that a dead American would ever lose their citizenship. If a dead American is still an American then that citizenship or identity is transferred to the skeletal remains that laws and policies surrounding the war dead must secure.

Citizenship is a legal status that applies only to the living-living however bones (human remains) may be subject to certain legal procedures and protections based on the nationality or residence of the deceased person, as well as the location where the remains are found. Another argument can be made in support of the citizenship status of the war dead. International laws and all military manuals provide for obligations to proper burials and maintaining gravesites for the war dead (cf. Harrison 2012: 1-3). If countries continue to have legal obligations to the dead, it follows that the dead are both subject to (and subjectified by) and object (and objectified by) state power (cf. Rubin 2015: 148). It might then be said that states are comprised both of living citizens and dead semi-citizens (cf. Cohen 2009; Anderson 1983: 6).

Bones have magico-religious qualities and waver between the spiritual and physical worlds. They are physical objects but may also be perceived as and treated as the spirit of the deceased individual. This is apparent not just in how Keke or Otira (refer to chap. 3) talk about the bones they find but also in how veterans and kin treat and talk affectionately to the bones of their

comrades or relatives. The dichotomy between the spirit and the bone, between corporeal and non-corporeal or seen and unseen is encapsulated in the materiality of bones. Hence, I posit that any legal apparatuses that cater for the bones (corpses) of the foreign war dead simultaneously apply to the ghosts of war or these semi-citizens of other countries whose governments are still actively searching for them.

Bones do not always talk or exert their own will and need an avatar of sorts to facilitate their needs, or at least the stipulated requirements of international laws and army manuals related to the treatment of the war dead. The State becomes this avatar for bones of the foreign dead of WWII in PNG. On another level, in both Gorari and Tol the bones/spirits of the war dead externalise themselves and identity through dreams and other apparitions. People like Keke, Sega and Sylvester or the *glasman* Geso who interact with these bones/spirits, provide unique perspectives of the foreign war dead and a way to extend relations with foreign others.

My discussion on citizenship ultimately boils down to ideas of origin and ownership of war surplus materials and of the bones of WWII dead by extension. Moutu (2013: 6) notes that ownership is always embedded within a matrix of relationships in the same way an owner is implicated. Landowners may claim ownership of bones because of their relation to the land on which the bones are located yet their claims do not trump the ownership rights of living kin or comrades who had closer social relationships to the deceased. The presentiments of Keke and Ijumi in Gorari or Pate in Tol that 'their people will come and get their bones or dog tags in the future' acknowledges preexisting relationships to their own relational claims. The landowner asserts a right to use that opportunity to expand their networks of relations in ways pertinent in their culture and that may benefit their own interests.

The War Surplus Material Act 1952 is the legislation under which bones of the foreign war dead are now administered in PNG. But the legislation was created for very different purposes to preservation, initially placed under the Finance Department of the colonial administration. Immediately after the war there was a booming scrap metal industry with foreign entities siphoning tonnes of metallic war refuse offshores for sale. The act was put in place to regulate the industry and to generate some revenue for the government. Post independence, in the 1980s, the PNG Government parked the act under the Civil Aviation Authority with the intention for the authority to take responsibility for securing the hundreds of warbird wrecks around the country. That was an awkward fit since only one type of war surplus material would be catered for. After the enactment of the National Museum & Art Gallery Act in 1992 the War Surplus Material Act was finally institutionalised where the changing value of its many and varied objects of focus could be better secured.

In line with international laws, the PNG Government recognizes the right and responsibility of foreign governments and bereaved families for the recovery and repatriation of their war dead. The PNG Museum has been involved in this work since the 1980s. The adoption of the War Surplus Material Act in 1992 gave it a clearer mandate to secure the historical and cultural heritage of the ruins of WWII. In its interpretation of 'war surplus material' the Act defines these in terms of the technological refuse of WWII – building, fitting, structure, aircraft, ship, vehicle,

machinery, equipment, or chattel are the exact terms used. Section 2 of the Act deals with the ownership of war surplus material and affirms that,

> In any proceedings, civil or criminal, in which the question of the ownership of war surplus material arises, the war surplus material shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed for all purposes to be the absolute property of the State.

The Act does not specifically mention corpses or bones of the war dead, yet the working policies of the PNG Museum have operated under the assumption that they are accommodated for in the definition of 'war surplus material' and so are likewise owned by the PNG State.

The former Director of the PNG Museum, Moutu, explains the policy plays at work,

> What the Museum does is an extension of the legal definition of 'war surplus materials' that extends to include human remains. But there is nothing explicit in law and in policy. The apparent policy work that the PNG Museum does divides up between what is exterior and what is interior as it were. The exterior includes vehicles, aircraft and ships, artillery and so forth. These form part of the notion of war surplus materials that belongs to the State. What is interior include the clothes, dog tags, necklaces, wedding rings, and the skeletal remains of the fallen soldiers. There appears to be a policy play in which what is exterior becomes a state property of PNG. What is interior is provenanced to its genetic/national origins which is then taken back by international recovery missions including Australia, Japan, and the USA (personal communication, 03 April 2024).

Here Moutu outlines the presumptions of Museum policies versus those of human remains recovery missions who go to recover the bones of their soldiers. Subsequent claims can and are often made for personal items that may be found alongside or within something that is, by definition, also a war surplus material. A lot of exchanges do occur across this division of interior and exterior, between the PNG Government and foreign governments or between landowners and foreign others. For instance, when in 2019 the Hanko (Japanese stamp) personalised to one Mr. Komatsu was found at Etoa (refer to sec. 1, chap. 4), JARRWC made an official request for its handover to them to be reunited with the deceased soldier's family. Some curatorial staff of the PNG Museum took issue with the item leaving the country and as a compromise the Museum requested a replica be made to put on display before the original was returned to them.

The benefit of the State claiming ownership of the bones of the foreign war dead is that, like other war surplus materials it then makes it illegal for landowners and others to sell the bones, a practice which was more rampant before PNG Museum laws were more stringently enforced (refer to sec. 2, chap. 4). These state apparatuses give it temporary ownership of the bones so that it can have a way of enforcing its own laws and facilitating their recovery and reinterment. Of course, this may be in direct conflict with landowners who might assume rights and obligations as a result of bones of the foreign war dead being found on their land due to fighting that occurred there. This makes it a contentious space that must be constantly negotiated considering cultural sensitivities on all sides.

As a matter of convenience, the State claims ownership of the bones of the foreign war dead until the moment they are transferred back to their country. The legal objectification of corpses, as 'war surplus materials', by the PNG State is necessary to safeguarding their subjectivity as

semi-citizens of their own countries. The dead continue to make ethical obligations upon the living and legal claims upon the State and so when dealing with the bones of a former living person we are not just narrating the past but are making present the issues of the past. As Rubin puts it, 'we are talking about 'acts of we-ness' that emerge out of an assemblage of living and dead citizens' (2015: 147).

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 directed that the war dead be identified and buried in properly maintained graves to permit their repatriation at the end of hostilities. Looting and despoiling of dead bodies are defined as war crimes in the Conventions. According to Harrison, military authorities view maltreatment of the dead on the part of their personnel in the same way as other violations of the laws of war, such as torture or the killing of prisoners (2012: 1). During wartime though, the stress of combat can lead to the maltreatment of the enemy dead. Harrison (2012) addresses the issues of 'misconduct stress behaviour' and military trophy-taking by soldiers both in WWII and later during the Vietnam War. Many Allied servicemen and civilians during WWII ranked the degree of humanness of enemies by racial markers, viz, they made distinctions between near and distant enemies coded in terms of the permissibility or impermissibility of trophy-taking (Harrison 2012: 130-1). The Japanese were seen as subhuman and akin to animals and Harrison (2012) highlights a notable practice, by some American and Australian soldiers, of trophy-taking of the skulls of Japanese war dead in the Pacific theater as opposed to the European front.

Harrison suggests that in the decades before WWII hunting became an expression of white American nationalism and a kind of initiation into manhood. The implications of this hunting schema on the psyche of American soldiers fighting in remote parts of the Pacific or hostile jungles of New Guinea manifested in the ferocity of the fighting. Trophy skulls, souveniring of other skeletonized parts or Japanese relics were taken back home as mementos of their wartime service or proof of their fighting prowess (2012: 132-6). This is not dissimilar to the Kaina/Hunjara practice of keeping the skulls of enemies at locations like Gorari Hu or Gorari Kombu (refer to sec. 1, chap. 3) or as is illustrated with the meaning of the toponym 'Kokoda' in my prefatory poem.

At the end of the war, the need to recover the war dead and to console the memory of their deaths was a compelling need to establish peaceable relations, even with a former enemy (cf. Faust 2008: 211-2). For instance, Kwon notes that the POW/MIA issue remained a central focus of US-Vietnam relations and that agreements made surrounding that issue greatly helped normalize diplomatic relations. The longstanding trade embargo was only lifted in 1995 after months of high-level US interaction with Vietnam in resolving POW/MIA cases. The two countries opened embassies in each other's countries just four years later (Kwon 2008: 47).

Just five years after the end of WWII the governments of Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, India and Pakistan signed an agreement granting the Imperial War Graves Commission the use of the land comprising the existing cemetery near Yokohama and provision was made for the maintenance of the cemetery. A year earlier in 1954 the Australian Government made a similar agreement allowing the Japanese Government access to search and exhume their war dead in the Territory of Papua and New

Guinea (Department of External Affairs 1958: 405). These agreements between former enemies represented the amelioration of bilateral relations. When PNG became an independent nation in 1975 it adopted most of the state instrumentalities created by its former coloniser including the kinds of agreements described above. Today the country has an important role to play in the memory politics of WWII since its lands served as battlefields where the war dead of three former combatant nations remain unrecovered and comingled in some instances, as with Etoa (refer to sec. 1, chap. 4).

The establishing of diplomatic or peaceful political relations between former combatant nations after the war are high order abstractions of dispute settlement mechanisms that are observable elsewhere in anthropological accounts of Melanesia. Drawing on the ethnography of her Hagen fieldsite, Strathern sees war and peace as different forms of exchange – 'Let us exchange wealth rather than fight' (1985: 128). In the adjustment of relations, it is not transformations so much as conversions which occur. She continues that public speech operates among other major conversions, notably wealth exchange and warfare, to register the effects of peoples' actions upon one another (Strathern 1985: 128-9). In the political sphere of international relations, the proper treatment and burial of the war dead and movement and securing of the bones of the war dead was an important exchange rate for 'converting' war to peace. That the work of recovering the bones of the war dead continues to this day further imply important reasons to maintain peaceable relations.

One of Strathern's arguments in her essay *Discovering Social Control* is that war and peace are just different forms of exchange in Melanesian traditions. This makes sense in the general Kaiva context because a feature of tribal individuality is a constant enmity between different tribes and even between the component clans of a single tribe (Williams 1930: 160). There are linguistic markers that qualify this state of relations. For instance, in Kaiva *tokples toho* means friend or relative and *kitoho* means enemy. The Hunjara/Kaina variant is *tofo* meaning friend or relative and *kitofo* for enemy. The prefix *ki-* literally translates to 'spear' which changes the meaning of *toho/tofo* to enemy. *Kitoho/kitofo* is a 'spear friend' or enemy with whom one exchanges blows of spears or other physical exchanges of fighting. Friend and enemy are just different sides of the same coin easily flipped or converted by the shifting state of inter-clan or inter-tribe relations.

The kind of political and legal lives of bones envisaged here entail certain kinds of relations between the living-living and the living-dead. These connections exist because of shared historical trauma but may be quiescent until the need to make certain claims or rehabilitate relationships presents. Following Strathern's (2020) exegetical exercise, clarifying my usage of 'connection' and 'relation' will bring into better focus how I am making the link between local cosmologies of the dead and secular laws related to the war dead. Citing Feldman (2011), Strathern argues that a distinction be made between the two terms as methodological constructs in the study of global processes. Unconnected actors (not in direct communication with one another) may nonetheless be related though 'indirect social relations,' mediated through some 'variety of abstract mechanism'. Strathern surmises that relations influence – and pose problems for – actors far beyond the scope of their connections (Strathern 2020: 8).

The ontological status of the ghosts of WWII and their place in local cosmologies is important to how people, like Keke, Ijumi or Sylvester, understand the war. Equally important are the expectations that flow from that relationship to the ghosts of WWII in terms of peoples' relationships to living foreigners including organizations like veteran's associations. Kwon for instance does not focus so much on how the relationship with the ghosts of war impacts the relations to foreign others that come to recover bones. It is a Melanesian thing to focus on the idea that these kinds of relations are not a contract that expires once both parties satisfy certain terms but that it is always possible to call on that relation again and make new claims based on it. In a Melanesian context the quality of the relationship to the spirit of a foreign soldier, represented by associated living foreigners like veteran's associations or bereaved family members, may be determined by the degree to which certain claims or a series of expectations can be negotiated.

Relationships between the living-living and the living-dead are processual – figured as interdependent and always being negotiated and renegotiated just as those among the living-living. People make claims for compensation or payment for bones insofar as it brings into relief their relationship to the land and the denizen spirits. When foreign others recover and remove bones without any kind of exchange it undermines the landowners' primary relations. This is what the senior Anjeka, who was the chief of Tausuva-Ferahane Clan in 1987, feared when he insisted that the Japanese meet his demands before he granted them access to his land where their bones are buried. The naming of Tol High School after the ill-fated Lark Force Battalion has also been a way to intimate historical connections that can benefit current relations and engender future relationships.

Conclusion

Section 1 - Summary

This thesis examined how WWII was experienced in PNG; the social interplays between people and war surplus materials, particularly bones/spirits, in the context of former battlefields; and it has looked at how people seek to extend social relations with former combatant nations in the present through shared wartime heritage that they see as forming part of their environmental resources they can benefit from. Most of the accounts of WWII in PNG are written for an academic and Western audience. I have tried to use my interlocutors' voices to tell their own stories and to articulate their concerns and ideas in a way that I hope is in accordance with how I heard them being expressed to me.

Falgout, Poyer, and Carucci (2008: 1) write that Micronesians, like other indigenous peoples, are 'missing in action' from the written accounts of WWII. In the Solomon Islands, Kwai (2017: 11) sought to fill a similar gap in islander participation and analysis of local wartime experiences. These decolonizing perspectives open up space for the kind of retellings of WWII that I have documented.

Papua New Guineans during WWII were in a state of in-betweenness. In Chapter 1 I compare them to Strathern's Hagen women (1972). Insofar as they had competing claims to their physical support and economic output – as carriers, soldiers, and labourers on copra and rubber plantations still being operated in the interwar period. By the end of the war, the Japanese officially had 2,617 indigenous people under employment in Rabaul and several thousands in other regions (Iwamoto 2006: 259). Official ANGAU estimates put a total of 50,000 labourers split almost evenly between Papua and New Guinea by November of 1945 out of a total population of 2 million (Riseman 2012: 121-122). Sections 2, 3, and 4 of Chapter 1 look at Papuans and New Guineans who fall into the categories of carriers, soldiers and alleged collaborators. But many more people, both men and women, served as general labourers for the former combatants whether this was paid or coerced. They worked on plantations, on airfields, road construction, building bridges, draining mosquito-infested swamps, harvesting garden foods, washing laundry and so on. Papua New Guinean labourers during WWII are a group of people for which more research can be done in the future.

Some of the roles stated above did overlap, which may also explain the high numbers of labourers estimated. Soldiers, however, were a smaller and distinct group because of the special training they would have received and the responsibility of bearing arms to kill. Soldiers like Moide, Kawatpur and Sanabise do not properly fit the *mit in a sanwitch* narrative. By choosing to fight and kill for the armies they served under, they placed themselves on a morally equal level with other soldiers of those countries. The actions of soldiers like Matpi who, during the war, expressed dissatisfaction over unequal treatment by the Australian Army proves as much (Nelson 1980: 212). Ako notes that Moide's salary payments ceased about a month after demobilization in September 1945. He would have made a total of AUD$1,974 during his time

served but there were no pension benefits for them so most PIB soldiers left with practically nothing but their memories, good and bad, of the war (Ako 2012: 217).

In terms of fighting skills and ability to kill, Papuan and New Guinean soldiers saw themselves as better than foreign soldiers. The reputation of indigenous soldiers as *ryokuin* or Green Shadows proves there was some acknowledgement by both the Japanese and Australians that indigenous soldiers were more skilled killers partly because of the 'unorthodox ways of waging wars' (Byrnes 1989; Ako 2012). Kawatpur and Sanabise for instance were renown among their people even before the war as powerful bigman. Their power and reputation were in no small part because of their skill in using *papait* (black magic or traditional magic) as I have demonstrated in Section 3, Chapter1.

The Green Shadows narrative, of indigenous soldiers employing traditional warfare methods, like making themselves invisible, in the context of a modern war entreats a consideration of the compelling differences between the two. For instance, I have suggested that Moide had no inkling of the broader political reasons for WWII. He passed away in 2013 and likely learned of the European conflict in the years after 1945 but his prewar upbringing and experiences influenced how he made the decisions he did in the interwar period. For instance, he lied about his age and joined the PIB at Konedobu out of a mixture of curiosity and a desire for the kind of prestige he saw the older PIB recruits had. Moide later personalizes his reasons and enmity against the Japanese because of their bombings of Port Moresby which created social displacements and disharmony in his village. That is, Moide figures the Japanese as enemies based on their direct attacks on his people and land and not on infringements upon the Allies.

Throughout Chapter 1 I have used the stories of Papua New Guineans themselves to express the differences between traditional and modern warfare. Ways of figuring enemies and allies is just one aspect but an important one because it influenced if and how people became involved with one of the fighting factions or if they maintained their in-betweeness by hiding in the bush. We see the tensions wrought of the weight of choosing to fight with one side or not in the arguments between Moide and his parents. Gebai Moide was strongly against her son's decision to join the PIB because according to her this was the *taubadas'* war (Ako 2012: 44). Even PIB soldiers expressed similar sentiments after the war when complaining about a lack of recompense. As one of Moide's comrades stated,

> We have helped the taubadas fight their bloody war. At the wars end, they just packed up and left leaving us with nothing but a few shillings for our blood, sweat and tears. (Ako 2012: 212).

There are also other ways in which WWII, as a foreign war, was framed as being radically different from traditional modes of fighting. The most obvious difference was the technological disparity between traditional warfare and modern warfare. Papuans and New Guineans had for many years been exposed to modern weapons like guns but nothing on the scale of the events of WWII. The Binandere had long marked the difference between the two with the use of the term *kiawa itoro* to refer to fighting that involves the use of rifles as opposed to traditional weapons like spears. *Gitopo itoro* and the Kaiva term *isoro* refer to the traditional raid. The technological

superiority of foreign armies is clear from local experiences of the Japanese landing scenario on 21 July 1942 which I detail in Section 1, Chapter 1. In spite of the long history of colonialism and exposure to modern weapons, much is made of the apparent novelty of the display of power by the ships, bombs, ship canon fire and so on. The hopeless situation described by his father, leads Mongagi to retrospectively describe Papua New Guineans during WWII as 'meat in the sandwich'.

The *mit in a sanwitch* narrative is best exemplified by those who chose to maintain their in-betweeness by hiding out the war years in the bush. Maintaining their in-betweeness was not the same as seeking 'neutrality' which infers a political choice or prior knowledge of a political situation and choosing impartiality as a way of avoiding conflict. On the contrary, most Papua New Guineans who hid out the war years in the bush did not have a full understanding of the reasons for the war and why foreign armies were now fighting on their lands. For them WWII was just the latest in a series of incursions by foreign others throughout the colonial period. Their decisions to remain in hiding was a choice of survival. Geso's wartime experience as a young boy hiding out with his people in the mountains behind his village in Wide Bay is a good example (refer to sec. 1, chap. 1).

Throughout the Pacific many islanders describe their experiences of WWII as being caught in the middle of a foreign war. Micronesians found themselves in the middle of a foreign war but marginal to its instigation, prosecution, and resolution (Falgout, Poyer & Carucci, 2008: 4). Solomon Islanders similarly had nothing to do with the initiation of the war yet it was fought between Japan and the Allied nations on their lands (Kwai 2017: 113). What I have shown with the *mit in a sanwitch* narrative in PNG is that many people indeed saw WWII as a foreign war. One which they were not morally invested in, politically motivated by or technologically able to partake in. Hence, many people sought to maintain their state of in-betweenness or their neutrality since aligning to one side could put them in danger of retaliation from the other. Running away from active fighting zones or evading air raids that did not always distinguish between who was being harmed on the ground was a more common experience.

These different experiences of WWII inform how immediate descendants view the war today and relate to the PNG Government or to foreign human remains missions. Moide for instance was a well-known and celebrated veteran who partook in many official commemorative celebrations of the war when he was alive. Oimbari, as the most famous Papuan carrier, was also active in commemorative events in the years after the war. Their political agenda was for acknowledgement of their service in terms of pensions. On the other hand, for the majority of people whose relatives were displaced by the war or who experienced indirect harm because of the fighting, the political agenda today becomes restitution – or restitution though development. What my ethnography shows is that people may not ask directly for compensation but seek to create relational links to benefit from the historical connections from their war heritage. I will discuss this more in my observations in last section.

In chapters 1 and 2 I use voices from the PNG Museums' Oral History Project and the Kivung narrative to show how religious hybridity and the many unheard stories and perspectives do not fit the mould of popular histories of WWII. They do not even form a singular narrative that

might be described as the Papua New Guinean story of WWII. The Kivung view WWII as a local conflict because of its internal origins and its functional purpose of bringing about the Wan-Wol Gavman. The Kivung narrative and ideas about their spiritual world that I examine in Chapter 2 redefines the political struggles of WWII by shifting the focus from Europe to PNG. This is a recalibration of the history of WWII in PNG that makes an important contribution to decoloniality.

The *mit in a sanwitch* narrative forcefully describes WWII as a foreign conflict because Papua New Guineans played no part in how it began. These hitherto marginalized stories provide alternative and important understandings of WWII and local self-reflexivity to the wars' ongoing effects such as the efforts of former combatant nations to recover their war dead. Though the Kivung and *mit in a sanwitch* narratives differ in many ways, they achieve the same goal of foregrounding Papua New Guinean experiences and perspectives.

Throughout my thesis I have used Narokobi's writings about Melanesian spirituality to compare with my interlocutors' spiritual worlds. In Kivung ontology the ritual of feeding the dead (refer to sec. 1, chap. 2) exemplifies the Narokobian notion of the living and the dead occupying the same temporal and horizontal plane of existence and interacting through the governing mechanism of memory and an invisible life-force (1989: 8-9).

The thrust of Narokobi's intellectual discourse in the Melanesian Way resisted any essentialist categorizations while he also attempted to sketch a general outline of what it might or might not be. Melanesian spirituality in Narokobian terms is thus described as a total cosmic vision of life in which the human person is just one component existing interdependently with the animal and plant world and the spiritual world (1983: 6). What my ethnography shows is the coexistence of the spiritual world and the physical, socio-geographic, through ritual interactions like at Etoa or Geso's PNG *ples daun* or underground (refer to sec. 2, chap. 3). My interlocutors' ideas about their spiritual worlds are accommodative of the foreign ghosts of war, or any category of foreign dead. They come with their own infrastructures like underground domiciles and well-developed cities that demand more space in the spiritual world just as their skeletal remains demand physical space at Commonwealth War Graves or at unmarked burial sites and mass graves at former battlefields. This alludes to an ever-expanding cosmography of the dead, a phrase I have used in my thesis to refer to the psycho-geographic space in Narokobian terms or the spiritual world.

Following on from this, the ethnographic voices showcase a hyper-hybridity of religious perspectives concerning death and the spiritual world. It is the norm that individuals hold within themselves, contrasting and often contradictory beliefs about the spiritual world. This is why Akena in Gorari can uphold the centrality of her ancestors in providing everything she needs and deny the existence of the Christian God yet contradict herself by stating that God has separated life and death and allocated both space in the physical world (refer to sec. 1, chap. 3). Her apparently contradictory comments reflect the long presence and influence of the Anglican Church in Oro. Meanwhile, Geso has stopped using the ashes of his ancestors' bones/spirits and

now only sources his power from Christian intermediaries like the Mother Mary (refer to sec. 2, chap. 3).

Religious hybridity in PNG resembles its linguistic diversity but differs in how it evolves and reproduces itself. Using West's (2018: 195) model of multivariate poles of influence the general frames of Christianity, culture and self-reflexivity propel this hybridity. The normal state is thus a religious heterogeneity that defies the kind of political and religious conformity that was being enforced during WWII or even today. Self-reflexivity as individuals or as groups, like the Kivung Baining or the Kivung Mengen, gives each their own unique character even as they act within the frames of the same tribe or politico-religious organisation.

Section 2 – Ghosts of War in PNG's Socio-Geographic Space

The ghosts of WWII that inhabit the psycho-geographic and socio-geographic spaces of PNGs wartime landscape are distinctive in time and place. These ghosts appear in former conflict landscapes that bear the memory and materiality of WWII. The ghost of an American soldier would not just appear to people on the shores of Lake Kutubu in Southern Highlands Province which remained almost untouched by the fighting between 1942 and 1945. That would be an irreconcilable phenomenon that would need explanation. By contrast, encountering a Japanese ghost at Gorari Hu, an Australian ghost in Tol, or an American ghost at Buna is not out of the ordinary. The ghosts of WWII, these living-dead, are also temporally distinct not just because they invoke the memory of the time of their deaths, but they bring forth with them the descriptions of the circumstances surrounding their deaths. Whether they died good or bad deaths is something that the living-living interpret and react to in the present by choosing how to remember or forget. For instance, Keke's invocation of Japanese ghosts of war as *sovai* when seeking assistance for interclan fighting places them in the same positive space by seeking from them the useful qualities, in this case adept fighting skills, that he sees them as possessing. In this context, the Japanese ghosts have become for Keke the equivalent of his local ancestors or living-dead whom he regularly summons for help when hunting bandicoots for instance (refer to sec. 1, chap. 3).

As former battlefields, the PNG Museum treats Tol, Gorari and Etoa as different parts of a singular conflict landscape in PNG that it manages under its legislative and policy frameworks. But this is not necessarily how landowners of these places talk about or imagine the former battlefield sites on their lands. The cosmography of the war dead in Gorari is distinctive from that which is found in Tol. The spirit of the young Japanese soldier whose bones Keke upturned visits him in his dream and they converse in Kaina *tokples* (refer to sec. 1, chap. 5). The psycho-geographic landscape of the war dead consists of their skeletal remains in mass burial sites like at Divune or in smaller scattered burial plots around which the ghosts of war linger. They impinge on the psyche and emotions of the living-living in the socio-geographic space when the living-living disturb or alter the positions of their bones. This also happens in Tol but the spiritual world there is described by Geso as a well-developed metropolis. Samo explains that the dead have ladders that extend from their burial sites into underground houses that become their permanent residences in the life after life. This is how the spirits of many Lark Force soldiers massacred by the Japanese in 1942 exist in Tol today, as attested to by Geso who visited Tol *ples daun* on many

occasions. According to Geso, spirits (*nunu* in Sulka *tokples*) have the ability to speak any language they need to communicate with each other.

How people experience their spiritual worlds also influences how they enact relational links with the living-living. In the anthropological literature on PNG, ghosts stand in stark contrast to the space of ancestors. *Baloma* are the main spirit form of settled ancestors while *kosi* take on the kind of displaced afterlife and haunting presence associated with ghosts (Malinowski 1916: 354-5). On Sabarl Island, Battaglia's ethnography also distinguishes between *baloma* and the negative space of death associated with ghosts in the form of the *waunak* and *piwapiwa* that may result from a person being killed during a war for instance (1990: 68-71).

In my fieldsites, however, the natural proclivity is for people to co-opt the ghosts of the foreign war dead into the positive space of their ancestors. Keke and Taifa address Japanese ghosts as *sovai* (Kaiva) while Geso and Litau address Australian ghosts as *nunu*. Both terms refer to the spirit of the dead and particularly to that positive space of emplaced ancestral spirits. This spiritual assimilation is achieved without any of the rituals required to transition the local dead into the spiritual world. One reason for this is probably that these soldiers died in a foreign war that most locals were not involved in the fighting and killing. Hence, they have no reasons to fear the foreign ghosts or, more importantly, their living descendants. There is a kind of gradually increasing scale of foreignness. The nearer your village or home is to your place of death the more is expected from your living relatives or the more likely some kind of ritual precedence has already been established. I am suggesting here that the ultimate foreignness or otherness of the ghosts of war makes it easy for people to adopt them without incident since there are no living relatives nearby from which something might be expected.

This contrasts with Kwon's ethnography where ghosts are the categorical opposite of ancestors, and as such they become strangers to the local community when this community enacts a ritual unity with its ancestral memory (2008: 7). The ghost of the American officer that inflicts the Vietnamese lieutenant with an illness has to be appeased by returning his remains to the US. Only then does the Vietnamese lieutenant make a full recovery which then ends relations between him and the foreign ghost which is not spiritually assimilated. No other relational links are established between the Vietnamese lieutenant and any living descendants of the American officer. The Vietnamese lieutenant's only goal was to heal himself of the debilitating illness that he blamed the American ghost for.

The case of Lotus Flower differs in that the skeletal remains are of a little Vietnamese girl from Hue, a village upstream from Cam Re. The farmer who finds her bones reinters her remains in his family grave plot, builds a shrine for her and prays to her through which she becomes like an ancestral spirit for his family. These mortuary rituals entail an explicit spiritual assimilation which I have shown is not necessary in my fieldsites. Though foreign to Cam Re, Lotus Flower is still Vietnamese and from a nearby village. By contrast, Sylvester in Tol, when confronted by the possibility of an unknown local war dead that could potentially be from any of the neighbouring tribes, experiences a ritual crisis of sorts. He is immediately cautious of how he treats the bones given the potential that the persons living descendants can still claim them. He gives the bones a respectful burial in a clearly marked grave but carries out no further mortuary

rituals which he explains can only be enacted with the persons living descendants (refer to sec. 1, chap. 5).

In Narokobian terms, Melanesian spirituality is conceived of as a vision of totality and cosmic harmony where the human person and the spiritual world exist in mutual dependence (1983: 6). Narokobi's student, Ferea, extends this notion of mutual dependence and harmonious co-existence between the living-living and living-dead by stating six purposes for such cosmic harmony. Restated here they are (1) to cultivate food to eat; (2) to cultivate the species or reproduction; (3) cultivation of trade; (4) cultivate peace between people to allow political survival of the community; (5) cultivate and further education; and lastly (6) to cultivate a religious life that allows the community to survive spiritually (Ferea 2001: 7).

In my ethnography I show how the historical actions of the living-dead and their physical vestiges, bones in this case, are key to activating a relational link among the living-living. The physical presence of the bones of the foreign war dead in former battlefields becomes like resources that locals may claim the right to benefit from if extracted from their land. The concomitant ghosts of war have become like emplaced spirits, *masalais* (genius loci or spirits of the place), or ancestors to locals so recovering bones of the foreign war dead must involve rituals that resemble local mortuary rites. These rituals are, however, not enacted to transition the spirit of the deceased into the spiritual world. That spiritual assimilation has already happened for the foreign dead in a way that does not seem to happen for any category of local dead. Hence, the accompanying rituals are articulated and carried out by locals to assist foreigners recover their bones while simultaneously allowing locals to extend relations that may lead to a flow of benefits in the future. Thought of this way, this process directly addresses the purposes of cultivating trade and of cultivating peace between people to allow the political survival of the community.

The war swept through PNG like a massive tidal wave. Much like a natural disaster that kills many people and destroys properties, many others not directly hit by the tidal wave may hear of the disaster though they were never directly affected. Like a tidal wave, the war was experienced most intensely by people along the coastal provinces and on islands like New Britain. The battlefields there, like Tol and Gorari, are geographic hotspots associated with the legacy of WWII where war surplus materials, including the bones/spirits of the war dead, abound. Even as the PNG Museum manages the conflict landscape as military heritage, my ethnography shows how the distinctiveness of each former battlefield site must be negotiated when dealing with foreign human remains recovery missions or commemorative efforts to remember the war dead.

The widespread presence of war surplus materials in PNGs conflict landscape imposes a new memoryscape which is sustained by the commemorative efforts of former combatant nations, war-bereaved families and the growing popularity of war tourism. For landowners around former battlefields this also influences how they experience their war history today. It deepens the affective links that people make with national commemorative events like Remembrance Day,

Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels Day, or ANZAC Day. That is to say that someone in Tol and Gorari would appreciate the significance of the history of WWII more than someone from Lake Kutubu.

Section 3 – The Museumization of Wartime Histories

In this final section, I will make some observations based on my experience as a PNG Museum officer working to preserve and understand the history of WWII in PNG. I will reflect on how that history is museumized in ways that are oriented towards drawing foreign others into local exchange relations. The War Surplus Material Act 1952 is the piece of legislation that gives the PNG Museum administrative responsibility of the surplus materials of WWII, including bones. I first made the following observations in a legislative review of the Act which I carried out in 2014. Its relevancy here will become apparent by the end of my brief analysis.

The history of the war is often propped as a watershed moment, the sociopolitical ramifications of which led to the later political unification of Papua and New Guinea. Prior to 1942 the headquarters for the Mandated Territory of New Guinea was based at Rabaul and then Salamaua briefly during WWII. Papua had always been administered from Port Moresby. In the period of confusion after the Japanese bombing of Port Moresby the Papuan Administrative Unit and the New Guinea Administrative Unit were created. On 10 April 1942 these separate units were combined to form ANGAU which operated out of Port Moresby to coordinate the Allied war efforts in both Papua and New Guinea (Robinson 1981: 12). ANGAU was abolished after the war and replaced under the Papua New Guinea Provisional Administration Act (1945–6) by the combined government of Papua and New Guinea. The Papua and New Guinea Act 1949 united, for administrative purposes only, the Territory of Papua and the Territory of New Guinea as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. The Act formally approved the placing of New Guinea under the international trusteeship system and confirmed the administrative union of New Guinea and Papua under the title of The Territory of Papua and New Guinea. It also provided for a Legislative Council (which was established in 1951), a judicial organization, a public service, and a system of local government.

Immediately after the war the salvaging and selling of scrap metal was a thriving industry. Donald Cleland who was Acting Administrator of Papua and New Guinea from 1951-1952 and the Administrator from 1953 to 1967, thought that any profits from the sales of these WWII vintage scrap metals should go back to the colonial administration. His government enacted the War Surplus Materials Act 1952. Section 2 of the Act grants ownership of all war surplus materials to the ‘State’. This reference to State implies the existence of a single entity and was made at a time when Papua and New Guinea were technically two separate territories still under Australian colonial rule. However, with the Papua and New Guinea Act 1949, the two territories had indeed merged and were centrally administered from Port Moresby. The War Surplus Materials Act thus acknowledged this unified administration as forming a State even though the legal statuses of Papuans and New Guineans in relation to Australia were still ambiguous.

The other thing the War Surplus Material Act did was to circumscribe the geographical area of the 'State' in 1952. In its interpretation of 'war surplus material' the Act states that it 'means any building, fitting or structure, or the materials comprising any building, fitting or structure or any aircraft, ship, vehicle, machinery, equipment or chattel acquired or used by any government or by the armed forces of any government in, or in connection with, the prosecution of the recent war, and are **located in the country including its internal waters and its territorial sea and the underlying lands**.....' A country's sovereign territorial waters traditionally extended 3 nautical miles or 6 km (range of cannon shot) beyond the shore. This gives us a physical sense of the 'State' at the time which was smaller than PNGs current national boundaries (which is 2,865,128 square km) considering subsequent ramifications of the UN Convention on Law of the Sea that allows now for 12 nautical miles for territorial waters and a 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone from the outermost islands.

The War Surplus Material Act 1952 was the first colonial act to use the language of the 'State'. The intentions of the bill's drafters may have been different but in their bid to define the scope and limits of the Act, they unwittingly consolidated the geographical and political integrity of the State even before PNGs independence over two decades later. These are some of the ways in which WWII and the War Surplus Material Act helped constitute the modern-day PNG State. However, the act was put in place to tax any removal of war surplus materials from the former colony and was initially placed under the Finance Department. Since being moved to the PNG Museum it has never been amended. One of its biggest legislative gaps is the measly K200 penalty fee for any illegal removal and sale of war surplus materials which has not been much of a deterrent over the years. The Act is outdated and has elements to it that require amending to consider the evolving role of the PNG Museum in the space of heritage management and human remains recovery.

Despite the far-reaching effects of WWII and the national agenda that the PNG Museum pushes, the direct experience of WWII was confined to the geographic hotspots described in the previous section. These are the areas where the PNG Museum is most active and where people continue to enact their historical connections to former combatant nations through their oral histories and the ritual interplays with the bones/spirits of the foreign war dead between their psycho-geographic and socio-geographic spaces.

In my role as a PNG Museum officer, I act as an official cultural mediator in the conflict landscape between foreign human remains missions and landowners. Museums in former colonies that are now sovereign nation-states work to reimagine and shape their own histories and cultural identities. The kind of cultural diplomacy at play here involves revisiting the history of colonialism and the war and reconciling the former imbalance of power by negotiating appropriate ways that mutual interests can be better served. For instance, JARRWC have made commitments to the people of Gorari to assist with certain community projects which helps them retain their continued access to the Divune Mass Burial Site (refer to sec. 1, chap. 5).

By and large, the political museumizing of the history and iconography of WWII in PNG tends to ignore the violent histories or racial undertones and foreground the heritage qualities that people seek to benefit from. Commenting on Waiko's work on the early history of colonialism among the Binandere Orokaiva, Bashkow notes that attitudes towards whites were governed by considerations of exchange. It is in the nature of exchange relations to be changeable and perspectival. They are changeable in that they allow bad relations to be transformed into good ones; thus, people were able to make peace with whites by engaging in material exchanges with them (2006: 54). This is why Mongagi can assert that WWII was a foreign conflict that was 'none of their business' yet have a guesthouse to cater for Australian visitors to the shores of Sanananda for war tourism; or why Keke's clan can initially refuse the Japanese entry to their mass burial site at Divune and years later allow them back to retrieve their bones. Exchange relations are also perspectival because for instance descendants of Papuans hung by ANGAU at Higaturu may have adverse views to the war history and call for compensation from Australia while others like Kavon actively seek support from Lark Force veteran's groups and war-bereaved families for memorializing the history of their place and attracting tourism.

Ivan Senisi's father saw an opportunity to make money from displaying to tourists the war surplus materials on his land when the trekking industry started picking up along the Kokoda Track in the 1990s (refer to sec. 1, chap. 4). Years later, his individual efforts have benefited not only his family but his whole village of Alola. In 2018 the PNG Museum, under its former Director, Moutu, initiated a project of building village museums along the Kokoda Track Corridor. The idea was to approach locals who already had collections or museum setups and rehouse their artifacts into a modern building. Ivan was still displaying his late father's collection under his semi-permanent house in Alola and when asked, he agreed to move his objects into the new, secure, and well-lit structure. The building design has an internal gallery space adjoined to an open-air market space that is used by the whole community to sell their wares and produce to tourists. Tourists or trekkers pass through the market on their way in and out of the gallery which they pay a small fee of K10 (about £1.92) to visit. The structures also have water tanks attached to them for the use of the villagers and market users.

Figure 37. Photograph of the Alola Community Museum and Trade Centre signboard. Traditional matting is used to ovelay the moden wall to make the building blend into the village setting.

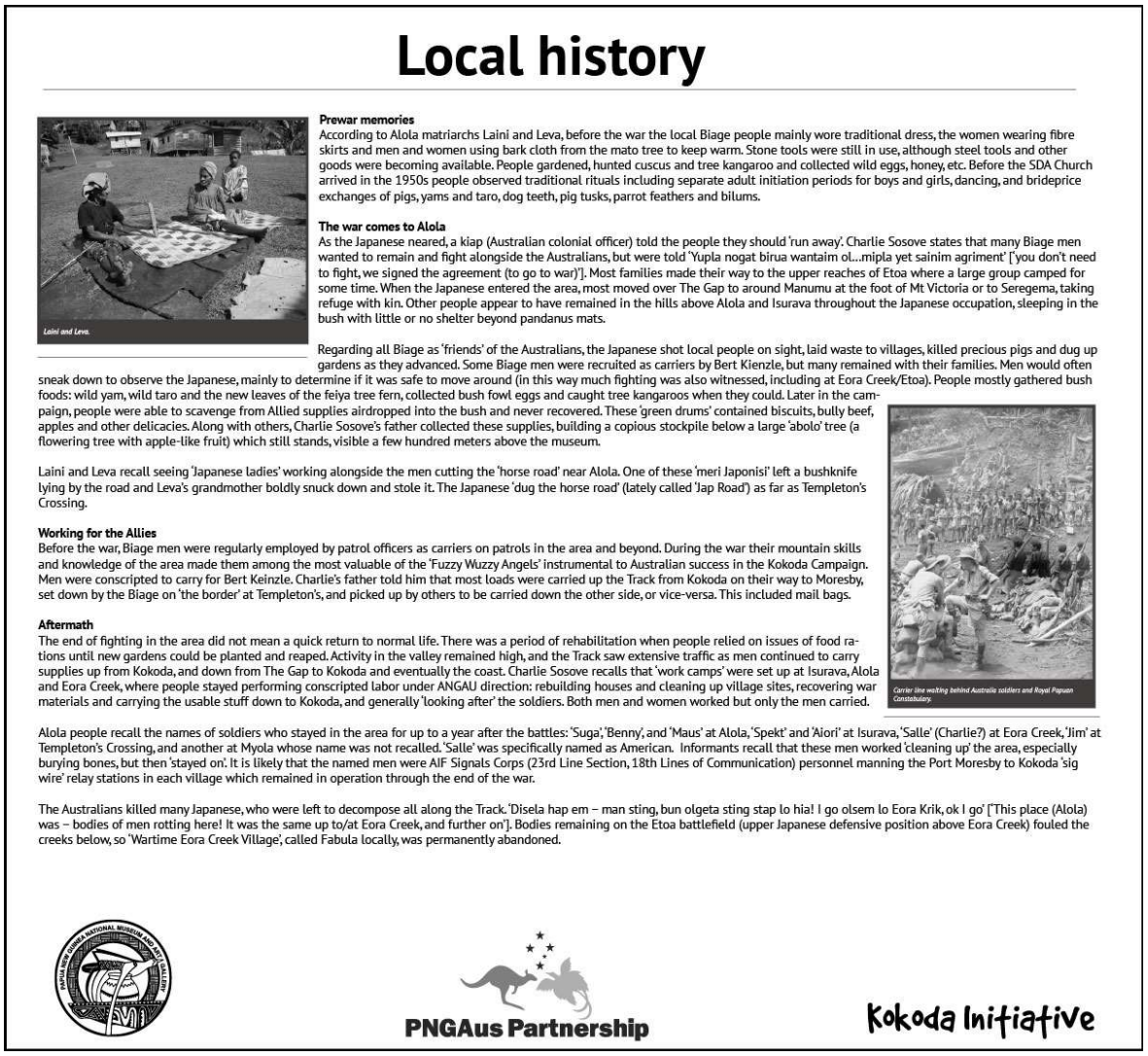
F***igure 38.*** Aerial shot of the Alola Museum with the Oro provincial flag, PNG flag in the middle, and the Australian flag hovering over. The main walking trail of the Kokoda Track passes right in front of the museum and the flag poles. The green water tank is partially obscured by the flags.

The stated purpose of this project is to work in partnership with local custodians to support the development of local museums in selected communities along the Track; to provide better access and interpretation of locally held artefacts; to improve education of both residents and visitors toward the region's history; and to develop a system of community-based preservation and curation of local heritage. Three village museums were built between 2018 and 2019 – one in Efogi on the Central Province side of the Track, Alola on the Oro side of the Track, and Buna on the Northern Beaches of Oro. At all three locations my colleague, Connelly, and I helped the local custodians to curate exhibitions in their new museum buildings. Each exhibition has labels for the different kinds of war surplus materials found locally like guns, mortars, radios, rifles, bayonets, and so on.

Figure 39. Internal gallery space of Alola Village Museum. Front and centre is a display of Australian .303 rifles and Japanese Arisaka rifles. On the left top shelf is a Japanese horse saddle and Australian helmets. On the right top shelf are mortars and hand grenades.

No traditional Koiari, Biage, or Kaiva artifacts are on display. Though this was discussed, the need to cater to the interests of tourists and trekkers who travel to Oro for war tourism influenced the final outcome of the gallery theme and exhibitions. Exhibition texts provide some local

history – prewar, during, and the aftermath – as well as didactics that are specific to the battles that took place on their lands. Efogi Village Museum has interpretative labels for the Battle of Mission Ridge-Brigade Hill (6-9 September 1942); Alola Village Museum has a panel on the battles that happened at Eora Creek which included the engagements at Etoa in late October 1942; and Buna has didactics about the Japanese landings in late July of 1942 and the later battle between the Japanese and Allies between mid-November 1942 and early February 1943. Other exhibition texts provide an overview of the war in PNG.



Local history

Laini and Leva.

Prewar memories

According to Alola matriarchs Laini and Leva, before the war the local Biage people mainly wore traditional dress, the women wearing fibre skirts and men and women using bark cloth from the mato tree to keep warm. Stone tools were still in use, although steel tools and other goods were becoming available. People gardened, hunted cuscus and tree kangaroo and collected wild eggs, honey, etc. Before the SDA Church arrived in the 1950s people observed traditional rituals including separate adult initiation periods for boys and girls, dancing, and brideprice exchanges of pigs, yams and taro, dog teeth, pig tusks, parrot feathers and bilums.

The war comes to Alola

As the Japanese neared, a kiap (Australian colonial officer) told the people they should 'run away'. Charlie Sosove states that many Biage men wanted to remain and fight alongside the Australians, but were told 'Yupla nogat birua wantaim ol…mipla yet sainim agriment' ['you don't need to fight, we signed the agreement (to go to war)']. Most families made their way to the upper reaches of Etoa where a large group camped for some time. When the Japanese entered the area, most moved over The Gap to around Manumu at the foot of Mt Victoria or to Seregema, taking refuge with kin. Other people appear to have remained in the hills above Alola and Isurava throughout the Japanese occupation, sleeping in the bush with little or no shelter beyond pandanus mats.

Regarding all Biage as 'friends' of the Australians, the Japanese shot local people on sight, laid waste to villages, killed precious pigs and dug up gardens as they advanced. Some Biage men were recruited as carriers by Bert Kienzle, but many remained with their families. Men would often sneak down to observe the Japanese, mainly to determine if it was safe to move around (in this way much fighting was also witnessed, including at Eora Creek/Etoa). People mostly gathered bush foods: wild yam, wild taro and the new leaves of the feiya tree fern, collected bush fowl eggs and caught tree kangaroos when they could. Later in the campaign, people were able to scavenge from Allied supplies airdropped into the bush and never recovered. These 'green drums' contained biscuits, bully beef, apples and other delicacies. Along with others, Charlie Sosove's father collected these supplies, building a copious stockpile below a large 'abolo' tree (a flowering tree with apple-like fruit) which still stands, visible a few hundred meters above the museum.

Carrier line waiting behind Australia soldiers and Royal Papuan Constabulary.

Laini and Leva recall seeing 'Japanese ladies' working alongside the men cutting the 'horse road' near Alola. One of these 'meri Japonisi' left a bushknife lying by the road and Leva's grandmother boldly snuck down and stole it. The Japanese 'dug the horse road' (lately called 'Jap Road') as far as Templeton's Crossing.

Working for the Allies

Before the war, Biage men were regularly employed by patrol officers as carriers on patrols in the area and beyond. During the war their mountain skills and knowledge of the area made them among the most valuable of the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' instrumental to Australian success in the Kokoda Campaign. Men were conscripted to carry for Bert Keinzle. Charlie's father told him that most loads were carried up the Track from Kokoda on their way to Moresby, set down by the Biage on 'the border' at Templeton's, and picked up by others to be carried down the other side, or vice-versa. This included mail bags.

Aftermath

The end of fighting in the area did not mean a quick return to normal life. There was a period of rehabilitation when people relied on issues of food rations until new gardens could be planted and reaped. Activity in the valley remained high, and the Track saw extensive traffic as men continued to carry supplies up from Kokoda, and down from The Gap to Kokoda and eventually the coast. Charlie Sosove recalls that 'work camps' were set up at Isurava, Alola and Eora Creek, where people stayed performing conscripted labor under ANGAU direction: rebuilding houses and cleaning up village sites, recovering war materials and carrying the usable stuff down to Kokoda, and generally 'looking after' the soldiers. Both men and women worked but only the men carried.

Alola people recall the names of soldiers who stayed in the area for up to a year after the battles: 'Suga', 'Benny', and 'Maus' at Alola, 'Spekt' and 'Aiori' at Isurava, 'Salle' (Charlie?) at Eora Creek, 'Jim' at Templeton's Crossing, and another at Myola whose name was not recalled. 'Salle' was specifically named as American. Informants recall that these men worked 'cleaning up' the area, especially burying bones, but then 'stayed on'. It is likely that the named men were AIF Signals Corps (23rd Line Section, 18th Lines of Communication) personnel manning the Port Moresby to Kokoda 'sig wire' relay stations in each village which remained in operation through the end of the war.

The Australians killed many Japanese, who were left to decompose all along the Track. 'Disela hap em – man sting, bun olgeta sting stap lo hia! I go olsem lo Eora Krik, ok I go' ['This place (Alola) was – bodies of men rotting here! It was the same up to/at Eora Creek, and further on']. Bodies remaining on the Etoa battlefield (upper Japanese defensive position above Eora Creek) fouled the creeks below, so 'Wartime Eora Creek Village', called Fabula locally, was permanently abandoned.

PNGAus Partnership

Kokoda Initiative

Figure 40. Sample of exhibition text on display in the Alola Village Museum. At the top left corner is a photograph of two elder matriarchs of Alola giving their experiences of traditional life and wartime experiences as well.

This model of village museums working in concert with local custodians has allowed the PNG Museum to channel bilateral funding from the Australian Government directly to the village level. The museum design with its attached market space and water tank contributes infrastructural support directly to the local informal sector economy. It is a model of development that I am keen on replicating in other parts of PNG, like in Tol, when I return to work.

These village museums compel a reconceptualization of the role of museums. The conventional museum setup might exhibit only local heritage artifacts and didactics for visiting others. However, that is not necessarily what the village museums at Efogi, Alola and Buna are doing. There is something novel, enrapturing and solemn about engaging with the history of the war right on the battlefields on which it took place. It is a kind of curated experience in situ that adds an educational aspect to the overall trekking experience for visitors but also locals so they understand the reasons for the war and why it was fought on their lands. The future plans of Etoa Battlefield will take things further by turning it into a kind of nature walk. Footpaths will be woven through the battlefield to allow visitors to see fighting pits, weapons caches, army bases and so on. Interpretative panels will signpost each important stop in the loop. From the perspective of local peoples', their village museums are there to draw foreign others into a recognition of their ongoing obligation to continue their exchange relationships. They are simultaneously tourist products designed to cater to the interests of visitors. Tourists and trekkers pay entry fees to see artifacts like guns or radios used by their forebears to wage war on a foreign land. On their way in and out of the museum they pass through a market space where locals have their wares and produce on sale.

Constructing a shared memory of the past with foreign others is an important part of statecraft but is challenging when the development needs of the present orients peoples' heritage sensibilities differently – what aspects of their heritage should they preserve versus what they should exploit. People in Tol and along the Kokoda Track Corridor, including Gorari, are faced with the dilemma of preserving their biodiversity heritage which includes the wartime heritage embedded in their socio-geographic space, or accepting the more lucrative arrangements of extractive industries like logging or mining. This is what Oro Governor, Juffa, meant when he said,

> They've endured and they have the courage not to speak up against it and say 'well we want to participate in the economic development of our country. We want to have a [resource] mine, or we want to engage in agricultural activities. **We never asked for this war**.'

As I am writing, the Kokoda Track is shut down because Koiari landowners on the Central Province side have closed off their section of the Track. This is not an infrequent occurrence that happens when landowners put the PNG Government on notice for non-payment of any promised royalties. In this most recent case, Koiari landowners closed the Track because of non-payment of K40 million (£9.6 million) compensation promised them by the PNG and Australian governments for not accepting a AUD$12 billion mining project in 2008. It highlights the fact that tourism is not as lucrative for landowners in PNG as the extractive sectors, which as

landowners they have to forgo in order to conserve the environment that holds both biodiversity and historical resources.

As extra-territorial heritage, the value of the history of former battlefield sites like Tol or Gorari are often asymmetrical in that their significance are unequal in the national narratives of war between PNG and other countries. That is to say that their significance is greater for Australians or Japanese than it is for Papua New Guineans. According to Beaumont, those who value it most, and feel an emotional 'ownership' of such extra-territorial heritage, have none of the controls and means of protection normally afforded by national legislation and political processes. Hence, the conservation of the heritage depends on two factors: intergovernmental diplomacy and the construction of some elements of shared memory of the past between the host country and the external 'owners' (2016: 355-6). This can be a positive situation as I have demonstrated with people like Kavon, Keke or the Etoa landowners but it requires constant diplomacy and maintenance of a narrative that upholds the significance of that shared heritage.

Individuals like Kavon in Tol have shown how locals themselves can successfully mediate between foreign human remains recovery missions, war-bereaved families or veterans associations. Kavon and the Tiensten's plans were ambitious as they sought to build a thriving urban centre with the local museum playing a key role in creating the shared historical heritage between potential Australian and Japanese investors. In Section 1, Chapter 5, I have shown that Kavon has gone on to have success in building a relationship with Lark Force veterans' and war-bereaved families associations and through that channelling support and resourcing for the eponymous high school and new primary school.

Indeed, locals' motivations are profoundly political in the way they seek to use the connections that the history and materiality of WWII affords them to build relationships with governments and foreign others. Their motivations are explicitly linked to tourism, historical tourism and war tourism as alternative forms of economic development. What is envisioned here is a kind of cultural diplomacy initiated by creating shared historical heritage, in this case the traumatic story of WWII that already draws many foreign others. The rationale for local museums is precisely to produce a museum of the war that they expect foreigners want to see and can then respond to with donations or resource commitments for the local area.

This opens up another question for a decolonizing project of PNGs WWII history: do you commemorate a decolonized perspective, foregrounding local stories, or do you commemorate the war in a way that draws out exchange relations with foreign others by appealing to common aspects of shared heritage? The PNG Museum has over the years implemented projects that cover both alternatives. The Oral History Project and the Tuari Helalodia (voices from the war in Motu) Exhibition in Port Moresby are very much in the vein of a decolonizing perspective (refer to Introduction). Maclaren Hiari's Orokaiva Archives and his lifelong personal project of recording the stories of Papua New Guinean carriers and other war veterans also follow this trend (refer to sec, 2, chap. 1). On the other hand, the Military Heritage Project, under which the community museum and trade centres have been built, commemorate the heritage aspects of the war valued more by foreign others to draw them into potential and ongoing exchange relations. In my thesis I have presented various local experiences and perspectives of WWII in chapters 1,

2, and 3; while chapters 4 and 5 look at the relational interplays between bones/spirits, the living-living and secular laws and how locals use the history of the war to extend their social networks in ways that can benefit them in the future.

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Appendix

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School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies Ethics Committee

Gregory Bablis
Department of Social Anthropology

02 March 2020

Dear Gregory,

Thank you for submitting your ethical application which was considered at the School Ethics Committee meeting on 22 February 2020.

The School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies Ethics Committee, acting on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC), has approved this application:

Approval Code:	SA14791	Approved on:	22/2/20	Approval Expiry:	21/2/25
Project Title:	Ghosts and Ancestral Spirits as Witnesses of War in Papua New Guinea				
Researcher(s):	Gregory Bablis				
Supervisor(s):	Dr. Adam reed				

The following supporting documents are also acknowledged and approved:

1. Ethical Review Application Form
2. Participant Information Sheet

3. Consent Form

Approval is awarded for 5 years, see the approval expiry data above.
If your project has not commenced within 2 years of approval, you must submit a new and updated ethical application to your School Ethics Committee.

If you are unable to complete your research by the approval expiry date you must request an extension to the approval period. You can write to your School Ethics Committee who may grant a discretionary extension of up to 6 months. For longer extensions, or for any other changes, you must submit an ethical amendment application.

You must report any serious adverse events, or significant changes not covered by this approval, related to this study immediately to the School Ethics Committee.

Approval is given on the following conditions:

- that you conduct your research in line with:
  - the details provided in your ethical application
  - the University's Principles of Good Research Conduct
  - the conditions of any funding associated with your work

- that you obtain all applicable additional documents (see the 'additional documents' webpage for guidance) before research commences.

You should retain this approval letter with your study paperwork.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Stavroula Pip rou

cc. Dr Adam Reed