

## 5. Olgeta Stori blong Wol Wo Tu

James Gwero

Hemi [Lamont Lindstrom] talem se bae mi stori smol, mi wantem talem se mi wantem go hom be oli talem se bae mi stori smol insaed long Wol Wo Tu so nao mi stap. Stori blong Wol Wo Tu hemi olsem kastom stori nao, olsem wan ples long Ambae oli kolem big man ia *Tagaro* we naoia hemi stap mekem faea i wok be volcano, be hemi olsem nao. Wol Wo Tu stori naoia hemi siksti yias nao an yu save luk samting we Tagaro i mekem olsem long ples ia yu save luk ol man America oli mekem rod hemia raonem Efate o Santo, hemia ol America i wokem be spos ol man America ino kam Wol Wo Tu ino gat hemia bae rod ino gat. Wol Wo Tu ino gud mo i gud, yes taem mi wok insaed mi faenemaot olsem be hemi gud long hemia we mi talem ia spos hemi no gat olsem ia bae yumi independen, Vanuatu bae i independen be bae hemi had wok blong mekem rod blong raonem Efate o Santo.

Be hemi isi nao we ol man America i wokem so ol man oli save tingbaot se ol man America nao i mekem rod be wan samting mi wantem talem naoia se long risej ia i gud blong mekem wan buk bakegen, tu buks bakegen we long lanwis mo Inglis mo Franis. Mekem ol man oli save gud bikos samting ia stori ia hemi sud be *once and for all* ino save mekem bakegen olsem we mi go long America long ples we oli kolem man ia mi luk ol notis antap America hemi talem se bae hemi neva mekem *wo* bakegen olsem from hemi lusum plante man. So hemi min se ples ia o taem ia hemi impoten blong ol man oli save. Bambae mi singim wan singsing we ol man oli komposem be i tokbaot Wol Wo Tu ia. Mi glad blong talem se Wol Wo Tu ia ol man oli stap komposem plante song long lanwis samfala oli tanis long hem. Tanis kastom mifala i kolem 'Naboe' singsing blong faet ia long Wol Wo Tu.

Nao mi singim samtaem we mi finis be wan samting mo insaed long Noisy Boy string band taem hemi sing abaot wan taosen man Tanna hemi gud mo saon blong hem hemi gud. Miusik ia i gud wan be wan toktok we hemi talem insaed ia long namba tu veses 'America hemi girap long ful paoa blong hem', nao yu luk ol man ia i putum singsing ia tingting blong olgeta i gudwan bikos hemi girap long ful paoa blong hem hemi kam. Hemi kam blong blokem Japanis so mi sapraes long olgeta we oli komposem song ia, hemi kam wetem ol ting blong faet mo ol ting blong wokem taon long Santo mo Vila. Hemi kam wetem ful paoa blong hem bikos sam long olgeta man ia taem oli stori wan man Paama hemi se Japan hemi se bae hemi win long Santo afta hemi safa long Port Vila. Hao nao oli save? Hao nao hemi talem olsem ? Yes hemi tru taem ia hemi taem blong faet mifala man mifala i fraet ia from Japan bae i kam long bus o i kilim mifala. Nao

bae mi stori, sori spos mi go longwe lelebet long woksop bae yufala, sori okei taem blong fraet taem blong fraet taem ia Japanese i mekem faet hemi mekem krul wan hemi kilim ol man olbaot kilim ol woman kilim olbaot long Solomon.

I gat wan man we ating yufala i save o no Addison spos yu stap long eapot blong Solomon bae yu luk wan memori ston i stap aotsaed oli talem se: *He gave his life for Guadalcanal*. Yu save storian blong man ia o no. Man ia Addison hemia hem nao hemi givim laef blong hem, hemi ded afta America i go tru insaed long Solomon blong faet bikos hemi no save go tru. America hemi no save go tru, tufala i faet long sanbis oli kolek 'a red fish' hemia blad blong tufala i ron long sanbis ia. Mi mi go long ples ia mi luk afta man ia Addison hem tingting blong hem se bae hemi ded ale ol merikel i kam tru, go tru insaed nao hemi go antap long plen i go antap antap olgeta wetem ol bom be yu save Japan hemi stap stap sat olsem ia oli no save kam insaed. So Japan hemi mekem eapot ia, hemia Addison fil ia hemi no komplitim so America hemi wantem ronem hem aot bikos spos hemi lan ia ten afta bae i kilim ol man Vanuatu nao bae hemi kam. Okei be taem hemi wantem kam, America i wantem kam be masket blong hem olsem hip blong hem, okei man ia hemi go antap long plen wetem ol bom evriwan hemi sat daon stret long ol masket ia hemi bosta hemi lus okei nao America i save kam insaed nao. Hemia stori blong *Addison* from hem nao oli talem se, *He gave his life for Guadalcanal*, hemi givim laef blong hem blong ol man Guadalcanal mo ol man America tu oli go insaed.

Okei hemia mi go longwe tumas mi go long Solomon stamba blong faet ia i kam long Solomon. Olsem man ia i talem se hemi kam be Japan hemi mekem stamba blong hem long Solomon aelan be hemi faet i go long America be hemi no go long America tufala i mekem nomo long Solomon. So faet ia hemi gud mo ino gud olsem man Solomon i talem se ino ples blong tufala blong tufala i faet long ples ia. Ples blong tufala longwe weswe tufala i no faet longwe from Japan i singaotem America i kam.

Yu save wae America hemi mekem wo from hemi bonem Arizona wan wo sip long Hawaii ten America hemi diklea wo. Ale yufala i save ating long 7 Disemba 1942 mi go luk ples ia so bae mi go go olbaot nao be hemia nao mi stap ting se ol man i mas save memori ia. Yufala evriwan ino save ia be hao nao bae mi mekem i klia long ol man blong save. Mi naoia mi talem long yufala, plante man oli stap singaotem mi nao tumoro bae mi go, mi go storian long Franis skul antap ia abaot samting ia Wol Wo Tu. So bae mi stori i long wan tumas fulap fulap long kaset blong mitufala we mitufala i rikodem ol man mitufala i wok sikis manis ia, rentem trak tri deis long ples ia, rentem trak long Santo 6 manis ten afta mitufala i go long Hawai'i. Yu save mi laki taem mi wok long hem mi go long Hawai be mi go tu taem, tu taem mitufala man ia be mi stil stori long stori blong Wol Wo Tu ating mi bambae mi man America from we mi stap storian long ol man America oltaem be las taem ia nomo sori bae mi talem nogud wan.

Long taon ia long Franis Embasi mi faenem olgeta man Japanese oli stap soem ol samting we America i sakem. He man mi lukluk mi seksek, he be wan woman ia hemi save Bislama mi se yes be mi mi wok long samting ia be mi mi no save stori blong samting ia. Okei hemi se long woksop ia oli mekem long namba 16 to namba 21 oktoba long taon ia, be woman ia i pulum mi i go insaed mi lukim TV blong samting ia atomik bom ia. Yu save 1945 America hemi sakem atomik bom ia long *Hiroshima*, seventi taosen man i ded, long *Nagasaki* long namba 9 hemi tu hundred an fifti taosen so mi talem ia rabis wan ia mi jes save ia be mi talem long man ia se: be i rong blong hu? I rong blong bos blong man Japan be America i putumaot wo ia long ples blong yufala ia nao spos hemi no sakem eni bom be mifala i no gat nao.

So sori mi jes faenem an mi staon wetem hem smol an mi luk video blong hem be hemi no gud blong ol pikinini oli luk tis kaen so sori mi talem ia mi jes luk. Mi sapraes long America mi save se man we i wokem bom ia ating oli stopem hem blong ino mekem bakegen nao bikos hemi rabis wan. Spos i sakem long Vanuatu hemia evriwan i go so mi storian i long wan tumas plante plante storian be bae mi singim wan singsing. Singsing ia mi singim long TV finis be mi fogetem wan laen an ten be i gud blong oli mekem i gud bakegen be singsing blong ol man America be hemi sud America Nasonal Anthem be ol boe long taem ia America hemi no kolem olgeta boe. Long taem ia America hemi no kolem olgeta boe taem ol man oli wok wetem hem, hemi jes fren blong olgeta. Wan samting we hemi jensem ol man Vanuatu we Franis wetem Inglis tufala i neva mekem ol man Vanuatu i go wan ples o i go kakae long wan tebel be America nao i mekem from taem hemi tekemaot wan paket sigaret hemi openem hemi givim long evriman afta i laetem olsem wan pija yu luk hemi laetem nao ol man Vanuatu oli tekem tis kaen. Mi mi haos boe oltaem taem mi skul mi haos boe long wan Inglis man, be haf kakae i stap bae hemi talem long mi kakae spos no bae mi sakem long ol dog, be neva i singaot man i kakae wetem be ol man America nao oli mekem. Oli mekem tis kaen laef ia hemi jens long Vanuatu.

Be sori i gat longfala stori bae mi singim singsing ia blong ol man America. Ol boe ol man neva oli kolem olgeta boe be i gud olsem fren bikos bifo yumi kolem *Master* ol samting olsem ia. No America taem yu kolem boe hemi no wantem be hemia singsing ia taem oli ronron long trak oli wok oli singim.

Okei hemia las wan i gat plante be mi singim hemia be mi talem se i gat plante singsing an mi laekem. Mi laekem ol song ia hemia wan man i komposem abaot Vila taem oli kam so, be man ia i komposem long tri lanwis Paama lanwis, Ambae lanwis, and tis wan long Inglis. Yu save long taem ia ol woman oli fraet long ol man America so stori ia long en bae i talem be nogud pat blong hem nogud mi talem. Mi talem olsem se ol woman oli fraet long ol man America be oli stap werem traoses blong ol man blong olgeta mi mekem blong i sot olsem be afta hemi jens. Be naoia mi luk ol woman oli werem traoses we oli defren nao be hemi no kastom nating nao.

Okei man ia i komposem taem we oli kam so hemi tokbaot laef ia afta hemi tokbaot ol man America, be taem oli kam so long taem ia long PP wof be naoia oli berem wof ia oli mekem go go i longwe be solwota, wof basis hemia saed long gavman building taon ia. Samfala woman oli singsing raon long olgeta faea oli kam wom long faea be afta oli luk ol man America oli kam so afta oli silip oli jenis oli werem sus.

Okei Tangkiu.

# The Stories of World War Two

James Gwero

He [Lamont Lindstrom] told me I should speak a little. I wanted to tell him that I wanted to go home, but since they told me I had to talk a little about World War Two, here I am. The stories of World War Two are just like *kastom* stories, just like the place on Ambae that has the big-man *Tagaro*, who is right now setting the volcano on fire. That's what they are. The stories of World War Two are now 60 years old, and in just the same way that you can see all the things that *Tagaro* made on Ambae, you can also see how the Americas made roads around Efate or Santo. But if man America had not come, and if there was no World War Two, these roads would not be here either. World War Two was both not good, and good. This is what I found through my research. It was good in that, if it had not have happened, we still would have achieved independence—Vanuatu would be independent now—but it would have been very hard to make roads around Efate or Santo.

I would like to say now that it would be good to make two more books out of this research [Big Wok], one in vernacular language, and in English and French, to make everyone understand the history well. This story should be 'once and for all', and it can't happen again. Just like when I went to America, the place of these people, and I saw notices that said that they will never make war like that again, because they lost too many lives. This means that this place and this time is important for everyone to know about. Now I'll sing a song which they made up about World War Two. I am glad to say that they made up lots of songs and dances about World War Two in language. We call the custom dances *Naboe*, the songs about World War Two.

Now—and I'll sing it when I've finished—there is something good about the sound of the Noisy Boys String Band when they sing about 'one thousand man Tanna'. The music is good, particularly one phrase in the second verse that says, 'America rose to its full power'. People repeat this song and think the lyrics good because America did rise up to their full power and come. They came to repel the Japanese, and so I am impressed with those who composed this song. They came with all the equipment for fighting, and all the equipment for building the towns of Santo and Vila. They came with their full power because, as some people, such as one man from Paama, said, Japan said that they would win Santo, and after that, make Port Vila suffer. How did they know? How did he say this? Yes, its true, this was the time of fighting, and we were scared that Japan would come into the bush and kill us. Now, let me speak. I'm sorry

if I ramble and stray from the topic. This was a frightening time. When the Japanese fought they were cruel, they killed people indiscriminately, including women, in the Solomons.

There is a man, who you may or may not have heard of, called Addison. If you go to the airport in the Solomons you will see a memorial stone outside which says, 'He gave his life for Guadalcanal'. Do you know the story of this man, or not? This man, Addison, gave his life, and after he died America came to fight for the Solomons. America could not overpower its enemy, and the two sides fought on a beach they called 'A Red Fish', because of the blood of both sides that was spilled on it. I've been to this place and I've seen it. After, this man Addison thought he would die, but some miracles happened. He flew high in his plane with many bombs, but the Japanese remained in a place where the bombs could not reach them. And so the Japanese started to build an airstrip there, now called Addison Field, which they did not complete. And the Americans wanted to remove them because if they were able to land planes there they would then be able to come and kill the people of Vanuatu. OK. When the Americans wanted to advance with their infantry, this man went up in his plane with all its bombs and dropped them straight on the Japanese guns and he was killed. There were great explosions, the Japanese were killed, and the Americans were able to advance. That is the story of Addison, of whom they say, 'He gave his life for Guadalcanal'. He gave his life for the cause of all the people of Guadalcanal, and for the Americans too.

But now I've gone too far, to the first fight that came to the Solomons. Just as this man [Lamont] said, Japan made its base in the Solomons to fight the Americans, but did not make it to America. The two only fought in the Solomons. So the fight was both good and not good, and as Solomon Islanders say, it was not the place for either side to fight in. Their places were far away and they didn't fight there, but Japan came and called for America to come.

Do you know why America joined the war? Because the Japanese bombed the *USS Arizona*, a war ship in Hawai'i. After this America declared war. OK, you know, I think on 7 December 1942. I went to see this place—and I'm rambling now—but I do think that everyone should know this memory, and of the memorial at Pearl Harbour. You don't all know this history, and how can I make it clear so that everyone understands? And now I say to you, there are plenty of people who are calling for me, such as the French school here in Port Vila, to talk about this thing called World War Two. And so I can talk for a long time. There are many, many cassettes on which we recorded people. We worked six months on this. Rented a truck for three days here, and rented a truck on Santo for six months. Then, after, we went to Hawai'i. You know, I liked it when I went to Hawai'i, and I went twice. Twice we two went, but I still talk about World War Two. I think I'll become an American because I'm always talking about Americans!

But last time—sorry, but I’m about to say something no good—at the French Embassy here in town, I came across a group of Japanese who were showing some things that Americans threw away. I looked, and I was surprised. One was a woman who spoke Bislama. I said, yes, I work on this, but I can’t talk about it. OK, she said that they would make a workshop from 16 to 21 October in town, and she pulled me inside and I saw on the TV the atomic bomb. Did you know that in 1945 America dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima? Seventy thousand people died. In Nagasaki, on the ninth, it was two hundred and fifty thousand. So I said this was no good, and now I know. But I told this person, ‘But who was wrong?’ It was wrong of the boss of the Japanese, but America stopped the war in your place, and if they had not dropped any bombs we wouldn’t be here now.

So sorry, I just found out, and I sat down with her for a short while and I looked at the video. But it’s not good for children to see this kind of thing. Sorry to say this—I only just saw. I’m surprised at America. I reckon that they’ve stopped the man who made this bomb from making any again, because it’s a rubbish one. If they dropped it on Vanuatu, everyone would perish. So I’ve talked for too long with all these stories, and now I’ll sing a song. I’ve already sung this song on TV, but I forgot a line. So it would be good if they record it again now. The song of the Americans should be the American National Anthem.

The Americans did not call workers ‘boys’ at this time. When men worked with them, they were just their friends. One thing that has changed the people of Vanuatu, and that the French and English will never do; all the ni-Vanuatu went to eat on the same table as the Americans. The Americans did it, because—when one took out a packet of cigarettes and opened them, he would give one to everyone. And after he would light it, just like a picture, you would see him lighting and the ni-Vanuatu taking one too. I was always a houseboy. When I was at school I was a houseboy for an English man, and if there was any food leftovers he would tell me to eat it, and if not he would throw it to the dogs. He would never invite people to eat with him, as the Americans would. And they made this kind of life change in Vanuatu.

But sorry, these stories are long. I will sing the song of America. ‘Boys’, they never called them ‘boys’. And it’s better as ‘friend’, because before we said ‘master’, naturally, and words like this. No, with Americans, when you said ‘boy’, they didn’t like it. And so here is the song. They sang it when they drove trucks and worked.

Okay, this is the last one. There are many that I like, but I will sing only this one. This is a song a man composed about Vila when they came. But the man composed it in three languages; Paama, Ambae and English. You know, at this time women were afraid of the Americans, and so at the end of this story there

is a part which is not good, and I won't explain. I will just say that women were afraid of Americans, but they wore the trousers of all of their men. I'll make it short, but after it changes. But now I see that women wear trousers that are different. And that is not at all *kastom*.

Okay, this man composed the song when they came. So he is talking about life at this time, and after that he is talking about the Americans. When they came, they came to the BP Wharf, which is now buried. The passage for the wharf is beside the government building in town. Some women were singing around a fire to get warm, but after that they saw the Americans coming ashore, then sleep, then change into wearing shoes.

Okay, thank you.