

CHIWAYA WAR VOICES



MALAWIAN ORAL HISTORIES
OF THE GREAT WAR IN AFRICA
collected and compiled

MELVIN E. P.
VOLUME 1

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Interview 1

name: Dinala Ndala
date: 8 August 1972
language: Chichewa
translator: Yusuf M. Juwayeyi
place: Old Soldiers Memorial Home, Zomba

Q: When did you join the K.A.R.?

A: I was called by the District Commissioner because I was in the K.A.R. before. [This was for World War Two service.]

Q: Were you in the K.A.R. before you were called for by the D.C., or after?

A: No, at first, I left my home after I had heard that the government wanted to employ soldiers. So I left home and came to this place. They asked me what I wanted; I told them that I wanted to become a soldier. So I was employed, I stayed here, until the time they told us to march to the war. So we started marching on foot. There were no cars. We were walking from this place to the war on foot.

Q: Can you remember the year in which you started serving with the K.A.R.?

A: No, in the older days, we did not know about years we just got employed. When we left Zomba, we spent the first night at Thondwe; the second night at Njuli, the third night at Limbe.

Q: Was your intention to go to the sea when you would have a boat?

A: From Limbe, we were transported by train up to Chindiwo. From Chindiwo, we entered small boats until we got to Chinde. At Chinde we stayed for three days. We were waiting for a ship which would take us to Beira through Manyika. We stayed in Beira for one week, waiting for the ship that passed through Mbwani [along the east African coast]. When the ship came, we went into boats which took us to the big ship. It took us four days and four nights, then we reached Dar es Salaam.

Q: But before you go on narrating about Dar es Salaam, I want you to talk about this place first. You have told me that Phalombe is your home; and that the government was employing soldiers?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, what made you come to join the K.A.R.?

A: Poverty.