



## ALBERT DOBROWOLSKI

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**Albert Dobrowolski, Reserve Platoon Leader, 43 years old, farmer by profession, married.**

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Place of residence (arrest) in Poland: Sosnowce estate, Raków commune, Mołodeczno district, wileńskie voivodeship.

15th Rifle Battalion, 3rd Company.

I was arrested on 21 July 1940 at my place of residence. Charges: being commander of the Polish Military Organization (POW) in the Wilno area, Mołodeczno district. I was informed on by a member of the organization, a corporal in extended service, Michał Motelski.

Tightly bound with ropes and lying supine in a truck, I was transported by four NKVD men to the NKVD station in Baranowicze. I spent three weeks in the prison there. Seventy people were incarcerated in a cell four by six meters large. We slept on bare dirty boards, without clean underwear. Lice were hatching everywhere. The medical assistance was limited to diagnosis, and no help was provided for the sick. Visits in the prison were forbidden. Interrogation methods: punching in the face, crushing toes with heels, kicking in the shins, threatening with a gun, being called "Polish bandit".

Despite threats that Poland was lost forever and nobody would be released from prison, spirits were high. There were many officers among those detained, and they strived to ensure a friendly and patriotic atmosphere. We were interrogated both during the day and at night, and forced to make confessions. I was accused by a member of the organization, Corporal Wacław Kajrowicz, of having enlisted him in the organization.

After three weeks of interrogations I was transported together with six other members to the prison in Minsk. 25 people, mainly the Polish Military Organization members, were

incarcerated in a cell three by six meters large. There was also Captain Jaszczółkowski from the Polish Army, Border Protection Corps in Stołpce.

Daily routine: wake-up at 5.00 a.m., food: 600 grams of soggy bread with water or watery cabbage soup. Hygienic conditions were bearable. We had a 15-minute walk twice a week. Interrogations were carried out every day, alternately during the day and at night. One interrogation could last for five hours.

Methods: beating about the face, kicking, pouring water into the nose (in a lying position); a person seated on the edge of a chair was pushed backwards while being held by the legs or punched in the stomach. After five months of interrogations, more stringent measures were adopted. I was stripped naked in a cloth-walled room and beaten unconscious with a rubber riding crop. After several days' beating, Capt. (D) from the NKVD – in the presence of Corporal Wacław Kajrowicz, who still insisted that I was the commander of the Polish Military Organization – struck me on the head with his gun, inflicting a wound. When I was summoned one more time, fearing that they would murder me, I confessed that I was the deputy commander of the POW. The *verkhovnyy* [supreme] court of the BSSR in Minsk sentenced me to ten years of *zaklyucheniye* [imprisonment], five years of *porazheniye* [deprivation of rights] and loss of property. The POW commander, Reserve Officer Roman Targoński, pseudonym "Puławski", was tried together with me. He was sentenced to execution by firing squad.

I stayed in Gulag camps in the north, in *Vorkuta-Stroy*, Bolshaya Inta. One could live there quite decently. Life was bearable, both the medical assistance and hygienic conditions were not bad. We didn't receive any letters or news from our country. There weren't any newspapers or cultural and educational diversions. There also wasn't any propaganda. We worked seven days a week. The NKVD was hostile towards us, they called us "*polskaye sobaki*" etc.

On 25 October 1941 everyone was paid 300 rubles, and all the Poles were transported to Jalal-Abad, where we worked temporarily in the *kolkhozes*. On 29 January 1942 I joined the Polish army.