



## **ALFONS KARPOWICZ**

### **1. Personal data:**

Alfons Karpowicz, platoon leader, born on 16 [?] September 1904, Border Guard functionary by profession, unmarried.

### **2. Date and circumstances of arrest:**

I was crossing the Latvian border on 20 September 1939.

### **3. Name of the camp, prison, or forced labor site:**

I was incarcerated in the camp in Lilaste. In the spring of 1940 we left the camp to perform various kinds of forest labor. When the Soviets entered Latvia, I was arrested by the Latvian police and sent to the camp in Ulbroka, which had already been a Bolshevik camp at the time. On 2 September 1940 I was taken to the internee camp in Kozelsk. Next, on 9 June 1941, I was deported to the Kola Peninsula, from where on short notice I was transferred to Suzdal (on 27 July 1941).

### **4. Description of the camp, prison etc.:**

The camp in Kozelsk – a former monastery; we lived in farm buildings and abandoned Orthodox churches. At first the housing and hygienic conditions were bad, and we were plagued by bugs. Later on, thanks to the energetic efforts and organization skills of the Polish camp administration, the conditions improved.

### **5. The composition of prisoners-of-war, inmates, exiles:**

There were approximately 2,700 internees in the camp, including about 950 officers; the rest were policemen, Border Guards and gendarmes, and there were a few local government officials. The majority of the internees were Poles, but there were also a few Jews, and I recall that there was one Ukrainian. The intellectual and moral standing was average. Mutual relations were good, with the exception of a few Communists, of whom I remember Airman Sergeant Medard Konieczny from the 5th air force regiment in Lida, Commander Second Lieutenant [surname missing].

## **6. Life in the camp, prison:**

Daily routine: wake-up at 6.00 a.m., checking the number of prisoners by the Soviet authorities at 6.30 a.m., breakfast at 7.00 a.m., setting off for work for the service units (improving camp conditions, repairing buildings, cleaning the camp premises), dinner at noon, then work again, supper at 6.00 p.m., counting the prisoners at 8.30 p.m., curfew at 9.00 p.m. Permanent workers (blacksmiths, carpenters, laundry attendants, barbers) received better, more nourishing food. Food: soup with groats for breakfast; for dinner – soup (meat-based cabbage soup) and thick groats; for supper – soup and tea. We received 800 grams of bread per day. Generally, the food was enough. We received five 50-gram packages of shag tobacco and 5 matchboxes per month. Clothes and underwear were issued from Soviet warehouses only to those who didn't have any of their own. The officers had a separate kitchen, with bigger food rations. Mutual relations were generally good. Towards the end of our stay, radio loudspeakers were installed in the camp. We were short on books. The internees had about 200 of them; there was a Soviet library, but it was filled with propaganda books and therefore rarely used. There was a club in the camp, and plays were staged there; we also had a choir and a good orchestra. There was a piano in the club. Approximately once a week we could see a movie, and the same picture would be shown several times.

## **7. The NKVD's attitude towards Poles:**

Tedious interrogations, but they didn't resort to physical violence. The frequency of interrogations varied and depended on the individual in question and the functions he had held back in Poland. We were constantly subjected to Communist propaganda in the form of talks, lectures and movies. The speakers, however, represented a low intellectual level. Political commissars went from one block to the other and tried to initiate political, propagandist, anti-religious etc. discussions. Poland was talked about in negative terms, and its political system and actualities were always denounced. I cannot provide any specific examples. The only Poland whose existence they were ready to allow for was a red Poland.

## **8. Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality rate:**

There was a hospital in the camp. We received Polish medical assistance under Soviet supervision – and it was good. The mortality rate was low, I think that it didn't exceed 10 deaths. I know that the former Kutno district governor from poznańskie voivodeship died.



**9. Was there any possibility to get in contact with one's country and family?**

We had poor contact by post with our country and our families, all the more so due to the fact that the NKVD men used to intercept and keep our letters in order to harass the internees and force more confessions during interrogations.

**10. When were you released and how did you manage to join the army?**

I was released on 24 August 1941 in Suzdal, where I also appeared before the enlistment board of the Polish Army. On 8 September I came in a Polish transport to Tatischevo, to the 5th Infantry Division.