

ANDRZEJ RACZEK

1. Personal details (name, surname, rank, age, occupation and marital status):

Master Corporal Andrzej Raczek, 32 years old, State Police constable, unmarried.

2. Date and circumstances of arrest:

11 July 1940, from the internment camp in Wiłkomierz in Lithuania, right after the Soviet army marched into Lithuania.

3. Name of the camp, prison, place of forced labor:

From 14 July 1940 to 15 May 1941 – the interrogation camp in Kozelsk to the south-east of Smolensk. From 15 May to 15 July 1941 – the forced labor camp in Ponoy on the Kola Peninsula.

4. Description of the camp, prison, etc. (grounds, buildings, living conditions, hygiene):

Kozelsk. The buildings were a former Orthodox monastery and they were quite damaged. We were living in former Orthodox churches, there were bunk beds arranged in three tiers, it was cramped, on the average 50 centimeters of a bunk bed for a person. Sanitary conditions were sufficient.

Ponoy. There were no buildings at all, only tents. There was tundra and a bedding of moss on muddy ground. We were living in dug pits or under the open sky. There were no sanitary conditions, we didn't even have soap.

5. Composition of prisoners, captives, deportees (nationality, types of crime, intellectual and moral level, mutual relations, etc.):

In Kozelsk, 40% were officers of the Polish Army and State Police, the rest: police, Border Guard, military police, Border Protection Corps. Mainly they were Polish, their intellectual level quite high and moral behavior quite good with some minor exceptions. Social relations were good.

6. Life in the camp, prison, etc. (the course of an average day, work conditions, quotas, remuneration, food, clothing, social and cultural life, etc.):

In Kozelsk, besides the work connected with the camp (kitchens, power stations, bakeries), we weren't sent to work and there was enough food. We organized a choir and a string band ourselves. They were showing us Soviet propaganda movies, and the NKVD members were giving us agitational-propaganda lectures.

Work conditions on the Kola Peninsula: 12 hours of work a day, double shifts (polar nights) without payment. Food was very poor (200 grams of bread and soup two times a day). We slept under tents made of sheets or blankets. We were working at roads and airport constructions.

7. The NKVD authorities' attitude towards the Poles (interrogation methods, torture, punishments, communist propaganda, information about Poland, etc.):

The NKVD's attitude towards us, being the intellectual group, was remarkably negative, which was visible during interrogations when they used methods to weaken our morale: they used to question us repeatedly, both day and night, for many hours about the same issues. Among other things, they were trying to obtain information about the army organization (from officers), they were demanding that we give confidants and informers away (police officers). They were trying to pit us against each other with the promise of release from the camp or improvement in the standard of living for our families, etc.

8. Medical care, hospitals, mortality (give the names of the dead):

Medical care was usually good, especially from the Polish physicians working in the first-aid stations. Lack of medicaments was making treatment quite difficult. I should mention the devoted work of Doctor Lieutenant Masalski. Mortality was low (three cases of suicide).

9. What kind of contact, if any, was there with your family and country?

There was no contact with the country. Correspondence: we were allowed to send one letter per month. If there were replies, the addressees didn't always get their mail, because the letters were often destroyed right before their eyes for refusing to testify.

10. When you were released and how did you get to the army?

I was released from the camp after the Polish-Soviet agreement was concluded. I joined the Polish Army on 24 August 1941 after Colonel Sulik-Sarnowski and the voluntary-recruitment commission came to Suzdal.