



## TADEUSZ CHUDECKI

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### Rifleman Tadeusz Chudecki, the "Children of Lwów" 6th Tank Unit

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I was arrested on 20 June 1941 at the train station in Lwów. After my arrest I was transported to Stryj and incarcerated in a detention center. During the investigation I learned that I had been arrested for hiding a former constable of the State Police in my house, and for membership in the Shooting Union. During the interrogations I was beaten and tortured horribly. I was forced to admit all sorts of made-up charges, such as membership in a counter-revolutionary organization, acts of sabotage in the factory where I worked, etc. I was threatened with a death sentence. "If you don't plead guilty," they said, "we will beat you so badly that you won't be able to walk."

When the investigation was over, I was transported to the main prison, where the living conditions were unbearable. Lice and bugs were biting us, and the food was hideous. Our daily food ration consisted of 30 decagrams of slimy bread and some watery soup, in which a cockroach, rat or a piece of a rectum could be found. There were eighteen of us in the cell in which I was incarcerated, and it was a small room, five meters long and two meters wide. It was so cramped that we had to take turns sleeping. We were beaten and harassed by the so-called Ukrainians and Soviet thieves. Weakened over the course of their long stay in prison, some people died of dysentery and typhoid fever, epidemics of which broke out at the end of May 1941.

On 2 July 1941, the prison was evacuated due to the outbreak of the war with the Germans, and our situation further deteriorated. We were loaded onto prison vans and transported to the train station. Those who had long sentences were executed by shooting on the night of 1–2 July, in the basements and in the courtyard of the Stryj prison.



At the station we were loaded onto goods wagons, 80–100 people each. On the way, our food rations consisted of smelly and over-salted herrings and 200 grams of bread; sometimes we wouldn't receive water for two or three days in a row. We were robbed of clothes and food by the Soviet thieves. I spent 42 days in these conditions! We were transported to a horrible prison in the town of Molotov, dating back to tsarist times. On the way we were terrorized by a Ukrainian lad (Ivan Niemiec), who murdered a few Poles and Jews in cold blood, to the delight of the NKVD soldiers who escorted us.

In the prison in Molotov we were incarcerated in the dungeon, where we stayed almost until our release.

Neither the food nor the hygienic conditions were better than in the Stryj prison. I was released on 10 August 1941 and sent to a small town called Lysva. Ragged, hungry and destitute, I had to find a job there. A few days later, the local militia forced me to perform hard work in a military equipment factory. I had to work 12 hours per day but earned very little; besides, there was nothing to buy. In the meantime I learned that a Polish army was being formed, and I wanted to join it. The local authorities didn't grant me permission to leave, and I was even threatened with detention. I didn't let them intimidate me, and on 12 September 1941 I simply fled. After a month's journey I reached Totskoye, where the army was being raised.

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