



RAFAŁ BOLESŁAW

Questionnaire filled in by a former POW detained in the USSR, Rafał Bolesław, born in 1901 in [illegible], of Polish nationality.

On 18 September 1939, a Ukrainian band surrounded the State Police station in the commune of Malin, district of Dubno, and arrested the officers and men assigned to the station as auxiliaries. We were disarmed and thrown into the cellar, while after the arrival of Soviet forces we were handed over to the NKVD. Next, we were transferred to a POW camp in Łuck, and then in Olesko. There we worked on repairing roads. What food you received depended on work performed, however the daily quotas were so high that hardly anyone could fulfill them. Thus, we would usually be given some soup and 400 grams of bread per day. They forced us to toil in temperatures of minus 40 degrees centigrade. We lived in the former castle of King Jan Sobieski, which had been terribly ransacked and destroyed. On 28 June 1941, the Soviets started evacuating us deep into Russia. We were driven on foot for three weeks, eating nothing; the guards would set their dogs on us, while if anyone collapsed from exhaustion, he would be finished off with truncheons. Finally, we reached Zlotosha, where they loaded us onto a train – forty men to a wagon – that took us to Starobilsk. The wagon was closed so tightly that we had difficulty breathing. Following our arrival, nearly half of the prisoners fell ill with dysentery. In August 1941 I enlisted in the Polish Army.