



## WIKTOR CHMURA

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Rifleman Wiktor Chmura, 24 years old, residing in Poland, stanisławowskie voivodeship,  
6th Tank Battalion, 1st company

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On 24 May 1941 I was drafted into the Bolshevik army by the Soviet authorities. I performed military service in the Starodub Infantry Regiment in the town of Urych, Oryol Oblast. During my service I was treated as their worst enemy. Political commissars harassed me the most: they were always badgering me and my friends to join the Komsomol and told me over and over to forget my homeland, as Poland would not be restored. The military *komandirs* treated me horribly. I had to run around like a dog, and the food was very meager – I could hardly keep on my feet. Medical assistance for the Poles in the Bolshevik army was very poor: even when someone was sick, he wouldn't be qualified as such, but marched off to do exercise and work. There was a time when I didn't get anything to eat anything for two days: it was on 1 and 2 August. I had to pick and eat rye ears or mangold which I found in the field.

On 20 July I was released from military service and sent, together with many friends, to work in Ural, in the Chelyabinsk Oblast. I was assigned to earth works: I was ordered to dig earth – the quota was 10 cubic meters per person. The food was horrible: frozen potatoes and frozen cabbage. If such food had been plenty, it would have been all right, but even these foodstuffs were lacking. Winter was particularly harsh, as temperatures fell to 50 degrees below zero and we had nothing to wear, neither proper shoes nor clothes, and we had to work from 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. For some time we even had to work all day and all night. We were forbidden to build a fire to get warm; instead, we would hear “*Robotay* [work] and you'll be warm”.

Many of my friends couldn't endure these conditions and died. At least ten dead people were transported every day from the hospitals to the cemetery and heaped up in the snow. Bodies were placed in the coffins naked, and in the cemetery dogs and other animals were



tearing the corpses apart – it was virtually impossible to dig graves, as the ground was frozen two meters deep.

We were forbidden to pray, and told that there was no God.

I was tormented in this way until 12 June 1942. I wanted to leave and join the Polish Army, but I was told that the likes of me were not allowed to go and that the Polish Army did not exist. Political commissars were the worst, as they didn't allow us to mention the Polish Army; one simply couldn't escape the clutches of these devilish Bolsheviks.

On 12 June 1942, with the use of counterfeit identity papers, I managed to flee to a Polish post in Chelyabinsk. When I finally reached that place, I was overwhelmed with joy at having left this Bolshevik hell behind. The Polish post sent me to Arus, and from Arus I was sent to appear before the Medical Board in Guzar. I arrived in Guzar on 22 June, and appeared before the Board on 4 July. I was deemed fit for military service. On 7 July I received my uniform and was assigned to the Special Operations Replacement Regiment. On 18 August I left for Persia.

1 March 1943