



## MIKOŁAJ CZAJKOWSKI

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Rifleman Mikołaj Czajkowski, 21 years old, Polish.

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I was disarmed by the Soviets on 17 September in the town of Borszczów, in the square by the barracks, among a group of fifteen infantrymen and three senior non-commissioned officers: Cadet Sergeant Jabłoński, Sergeant Świtajło, and Sergeant Głogowiec, the company head. We were immediately marched thirty kilometers into Russian territory, to Kamianets-Podilskyi. We had only carrots to eat, and only when someone was clever enough to get them at that, and *kipiatok* [boiling water]. We spent three days there, and when more people were gathered, we were loaded onto train cars. Our transport comprised some 800 people, locked inside sealed cars without water, and with two kilograms of bread per five people per day. The journey to Tiotkino lasted for eight days. We were placed in some summer barracks, although the cold had already settled in. The barracks were dirty, cold, and shabby, and we didn't receive any medical assistance. We had to survive three weeks in such conditions. On 25 October we were again loaded onto a train at the station in Tiotkino, and the transport left for Kryvyi Rih. We travelled for ten days in sealed cars and received food only once a day, just to ensure that we wouldn't die.

In Kryvyi Rih I worked in an iron mine. The daily work quota was as follows: 18 tons had to be brought to the wagons, for which we were paid five rubles, and we had to survive the whole day on that. It was like this until 10 May. On 20 May we were again loaded onto cars and transported to Ostra Góra in Poland. I worked at road construction there. On 20 April 1941 I was taken to Czerlany, to an airport building site. There were 1,500 people in that Gulag camp, and I worked there until 21 June 1941, that is, until the outbreak of the Soviet-German War. On 22 June we were marched on foot from Czerlany to Wołoczyska; the whole camp – 1,500 people – marched day and night, suffering from hunger. In Wołoczyska we



were loaded onto a train and spent the next seven days in sealed cars, 80 people in an 18-ton car. We suffered terrible hunger; it was a deadly journey. We were taken to Starobilsk. 10,000 people were placed in the Gulag camp there. We weren't forced to work, but we also didn't receive any food, only water. We were starving until 10 August 1941.

On 26 August 1941 I joined the Polish Army.