



FELIKS GALIMSKI

Senior Rifleman Feliks Galimski, civilian occupation – farmer, unmarried,
born on 25 September 1916.

I was arrested on 28 October 1940 – having been turned in by Mikifer Łapow, Jan Łapow and Szymon Pietkiewicz – in Chutor Borek in the district of Stołpce. I remained in Stołpce prison for eight months; I wrote letters home, but myself received none.

My family was allowed to send various produce solely through the agency of the chief warden of the prison. On 14 June 1941, they deported us to Moscow, where we remained for five days, receiving no more than a little water and some fish – although the Soviets had ample stocks of food. We were transported in sealed trucks, in complete darkness and finding it difficult to breathe. Some twelve people lost consciousness during the journey, while a few were seconds away from departing this world. Seeing this, the Russian guards took pity on us and opened the truck doors.

On 20 June 1941, we were sent from Moscow to the [illegible name] forced labor camp near Vladivostok. I worked on road construction in camp no. 2. We were forced to toil daily and meet a high percentage quota. The food was very poor: fish, boiling water, 300 grams of bread, a thin soup for dinner, with some millet or cabbage, etc. Medical care was provided on an ad hoc basis. Clothes were given only to those who were nearly naked; those who still had some tattered pieces of apparel didn't receive a single new item.

There were 40,000 prisoners of different nationalities, namely: Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Bessarabians and others from the USSR. A considerable number of them died, while I remember that one night the guards took a few, loaded them onto a truck and set off in the direction of the mountains near the Sea of Japan; nothing was heard of them since. I would guess that the number of dead totaled more or less 1,500.



The lower-ranking Soviet officials treated us abominably, but their superiors' approach was passable. The Russian prisoners were very well disposed towards us Poles, sharing their bread and any snippets of information that they could glean, inquiring about our former life in Poland – this interested them the most.

After the amnesty was announced, the Soviet authorities no longer treated us as prisoners, but as Polish nationals. On 14 November 1941, I received papers releasing me from the camp as a Polish citizen, a rail ticket to Astana, and 180 rubles – nothing more. Having arrived there, I was instructed by both the Polish representation and the NKVD to proceed to Kogon, from where I was sent to the Stalin kolkhoz [illegible] in Bukhara.

I remained in the kolkhoz for 65 days; there were eighteen of us there, and we went to work every day with the exception of Sundays.

We received 400 grams of reddish flour daily and, twice weekly, a kilogram of turnips. We would eat oilcakes, used in the kolkhoz as donkey fodder, and also hunt dogs. The conditions which we faced are impossible to describe – we could barely walk, let alone work. Each day one of us would go to the Polish representation in Bukhara and be told the same thing – that they do not have any specific information about the establishment of the Polish Army in the East. The officials registered us and told us to remain in the kolkhoz until we were called for.

While waiting for them to call us up, we learned from a Polish officer that some forces were forming in Guzar. He was unable to help us, however he did say that if you got there, they would enlist you. On 29 January 1942 I sold my house shoes and underwear, and bought a pair of old walking shoes, leaving a little money for the trip – to purchase the railway ticket that would get me out of this hell. Having prepared ourselves for the journey as best we could, we assembled ourselves and together escaped from the kolkhoz. After numerous adventures, I finally arrived in Guzar.

I was registered on 2 February 1942, and on 8 February the Recruitment Committee assigned me to Staging Area I. I spent the whole of February in Staging Area I, while on 1 March I fell ill with typhus fever, dysenteric diarrhea, and a number of other diseases. I remained in hospital until 17 November. I am presently assigned to the Reserve Infantry Group.

This is a partial account of my experience of life in “paradise” – the USSR.

7 February 1943