



HENRYK KRAMKOWSKI

1. Personal data (name, surname, rank, age, occupation, marital status):

Rifleman Henryk Kramkowski, 22 years old, student, unmarried.

2. Date and circumstances of arrest:

I was arrested on 16 June 1940 in Grajewo, Szczuczyn district, Białystok voivodeship, for membership in an anti-Soviet organization.

3. Name of the camp, prison, or forced labor site:

I was incarcerated in prisons in Grajewo, Łomża and Mińsk, and in the labor camp in Kedrovyy Shor, Kozhva region, Komi ASSR.

4. Description of the camp, prison etc. (grounds, buildings, housing conditions, hygiene):

The temporary prison in Grajewo was located in a basement, with almost no natural light (only a small window for delivering potatoes); it was close, damp, and dirty, and the cells were extremely small. It must be emphasized that this prison was situated in the city center, under the district administration office. There was no bathhouse, and underwear had to be delivered from home and taken for washing there. I wasn't let out even once during my two months' stay there.

In Łomża it was slightly better, because the cell was situated higher up and had some access to fresh air. Moreover, we had a bath every 10–15 days. Parcels from home with underwear and some foodstuffs were also accepted. The food was lousy (600 grams of half-baked bread and watery, smelly soup boiled from rotten fish twice a day). During the six months of my stay at this prison, I was in the open air only twice. The cell was infested with lice, bugs and other pests.

In Mińsk, next, the conditions were unthinkable: we were packed like herrings in a barrel, it was filthy and we suffered from various diseases. The food was lousy (with the exception of the so-called "Amerikanka" prison, where both food and cleanliness were above reproach). Living conditions in the labor camp were far worse, because this special camp for Soviet criminals of both sexes was situated in the far north, on swamps which were impassable during the so-called summer, that is, the thaw.



Food rations: 500 grams of bread and soup with horsemeat twice a day. The hygienic conditions were bearable.

5. The composition of POWs, prisoners, exiles (nationality, categories of crimes, intellectual and moral standing, mutual relations etc.):

The intellectual and moral standing of the Soviet criminals, usually Russians, was below par. Mutual relations were very hostile.

6. Life in the camp, prison etc. (daily routine, working conditions, work quotas, remuneration, food, clothes, social and cultural life etc.):

In prison we lived without any intellectual diversions, without books, newspapers etc.; it was the same in the camp. The working conditions were very harsh for people in our state of health, and it was impossible to meet the quotas (in the forest, doing logging, the quota was 5 cubic meters). Our clothing was inadequate for this climate.

7. The NKVD's attitude towards Poles (interrogation methods, torture and other forms of punishment, Communist propaganda, information about Poland, etc.):

The attitude of the NKVD to Polish prisoners was extremely hostile. During interrogation, all methods of torture and lies were used to disorientate the prisoner and make him talk. However, should the prisoner accuse such an investigator before the prosecutor, he was no longer tortured, but instead threatened at every step or even taken for execution. We were told that Poland would never be restored.

8. Medical care, hospitals, mortality rate (provide the surnames of those who perished):

Medical assistance was very poor, being in name only, and as a result the mortality rate was very high, especially on the road and in the labor camp.

From among those who died on the way, I remember the Polish Senator Bisping and Kulesza. Apart from them, Kułakowski from Warsaw died from poverty in the labor camp.

9. Was there any possibility of getting in contact with one's country and family?

During my stay in prison and in the labor camp I didn't have any contact with my family.



10. When were you released and how did you get through to the Polish Army?

I was released on 16 October 1941 and sent with my papers to the Polish Army in Buzuluk. However, when I got there, I wasn't accepted into the army, but sent south, to Asia, where I spent a month in a Kazakh kolkhoz, and only then did I join the army (10th Division) in Lugovoy.