



FRANCISZEK KRAWCZYŃSKI

1. Deported as a military settler.

2. Personal data:

Sergeant Franciszek Krawczyński of the reserve, son of Józef, farmer, military settler, married, one daughter.

3. Date and circumstances of arrest:

I was arrested by the NKVD authorities as a military settler on 10 February 1940 at 2.00 a.m. in the settlement of Niechniewicze, commune of Niechniewicze, Nowogródek district; I was taken with my family to Nowogródek.

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

On 8 March 1940, I was deported with my family to the Russian interior, to the Sholosha hamlet, Velsky District, Arkhangelsk Oblast, where we all worked in the forest.

5. Description of the camp, prison etc.:

Hard work in the forest. We had work quotas to meet, and we toiled for up to 12 hours per day. Our remuneration never exceeded 7 rubles 50 kopecks, and it was difficult to survive on that; we had to sell our belongings, as a kilogram of bread cost 1 ruble 20 kopecks. We lived in filthy, dark, bug-infested rooms.

6. The composition of prisoners of war, inmates, exiles:

In the Sholosha hamlet, there were up to 600 people deported from Poland. The Poles made up 65 percent of the population, and the rest were Belarusians and Ukrainians. There were children, adults and the elderly of both sexes. A majority of them suffered from scurvy, and many children developed tuberculosis. The elderly passed away during the first months, followed by children. In our hamlet there were a few people of great integrity, and it was thanks to them that we didn't lose our moral fiber.



The deported Belarusians and Ukrainians persecuted Polish families because they'd been hating Poles for as long as they could remember, but we didn't let it bother us.

7. Life in the camp, prison:

I bought food for myself and my family from the general canteen; it was very meager. There were some clothes, but nothing to buy them with. As for culture, there was nothing except for a school for our children, in which they taught only in Russian.

8. The NKVD's attitude towards Poles:

The NKVD's attitude: We were forced to perform labor and meet work quotas, and those who failed received smaller bread rations. If you wanted to buy something, they wouldn't let you, or even placed you under arrest. The hamlet administration was very brutal towards us. They spread propaganda that Communism would rule the world, and that Poland had already disappeared and therefore must be forgotten. They said there was no God, and all religious observances were forbidden.

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

Medical assistance was very poor, as there were no drugs except for aspirin.

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

There was no way to get in contact with the home country.

11. When were you released and how did you manage to join the army?

On 28 August 1941, following the amnesty, I was released from forced labor and recognized as a free citizen of Poland. On 16 December my family and I went south, where the Polish Army was being raised. On 22 March 1942, in Kermine, I joined the 7th Infantry Division of the Polish Army.

Official stamp, 13 March 1943