



LUDWIK KUCZKOWSKI

Senior rifleman Ludwik Kuczkowski, 6th Tank Battalion.

After I was arrested by the militia in Kłodka, I was incarcerated in the camp in Skole. The camp in Skole: two barracks, 1,200 people; it was fenced with barbed wire, with watchtowers on the corners. The food was very poor – about half a liter of soup in the morning, and in the evening soup and about 900 grams of bread. That was all. No hygiene. Lice were rife, as we went to the bathhouse twice in two months. Before we were deported to Russia, we were all herded into one barrack, which was immediately locked up and nobody was let out, so we had to relieve ourselves in the barrack. Then we were loaded onto a wagon, 42 people to a 16.5-ton wagon. While we were being loaded, our people tried to give us food, but the escort beat them with rifle butts. A day and a night passed before we set off; we each received a piece of raw salted fish, 150 grams of biscuits and a spoon of sugar. On the way I fell ill with pneumonia and lay unconscious for three days. There was neither a doctor nor any medicaments.

After 14 days on the road, in January, we arrived at Dnipropetrovsk. They placed us in cells: 16 people were put in a single person cell and 52 people in a cell for two. Four months later I was summoned for an investigation, during which I was beaten. They made me an offer of 10,000 rubles and enrollment in an aviation school in Odessa for pleading guilty. When I declined the offer, I was again beaten. Food: 60 decagrams of bread and half a liter of soup in the morning. Then tea and dinner, for which we had again half a liter of soup and two spoons of kasha. After six months, the verdict was delivered: I was sentenced to eight years in a labor camp and deprivation of civil rights for five years. From Dnipropetrovsk I was taken to Kharkiv. There were 15 people per one prison wagon with closed windows.

From Kharkiv we went to Arkhangelsk. We were poorly fed on the way. We had tea and twice a day we received half a liter of soup and either 150 grams of biscuits or 40 decagrams of bread. In Arkhangelsk we were to board a ship – our escort had dogs, one of which bit me



in the leg. About 4,500 people were crammed onto a rather small coal ship, on which there were six layers of pallets. We didn't receive any water, and the Soviet thieves robbed us even of shoes and trousers. The toilet was located first on the decks, and later inside. Almost all of us suffered from sea sickness. A battleship followed in our wake as our escort.

When we arrived at Naryan-Mar, we were unloaded and left for two days in a field. Then they let us into barracks and tents (*palatkas*). Two weeks later they loaded us onto barges, and a few days later typhus and dysentery broke out. About 70 people died in one week. Our food rations consisted of 150 grams of biscuits and one herring, or sometimes soup. We went to Abis on foot (about 120 kilometers). On the way, those who couldn't keep up with the rest due to illness or exhaustion were finished off. The camp – the so-called 2nd colony. There were some 550 of us in three barracks. After two months, three fourths were ill or had already died. I was beaten twice for not going to work due to lack of shoes. It was there that my friend Alwiniger died of exhaustion, and Żygarlicki fell ill with pulmonary tuberculosis. The work quota: 6.5 cubic meters of earth, in order to earn 70 decagrams of bread. I suffered from scurvy. I swelled up so much that they had to cut my clothes and [illegible]. Food was a very poor: soup in the morning, soup for dinner, and kasha for meeting 100 percent [of the quota]. In Abis, Vorkuta, [illegible] the same. I was in Vorkuta when the *osvobozhdeniye* [liberation] came. Nevertheless, we toiled for three more weeks, and then we went in barges to Kanin Nos, where we were released, and each of us received the following provisions to make our way to Buzuluk: 5 kilograms of bread, 25 decagrams of sugar, two preserves [illegible] of 88 decagrams each and 218 rubles. They didn't give me back my watch, cigarette case, 350 Polish zlotys, almost the same amount in dollars and 890 rubles, saying that since I had used my *kvitantsiya* [receipt] as cigarette paper, it meant that I didn't need any of these. On the contrary, I needed almost all of these.