

JAN SZCZYGŁO

1. [Personal data:]

Jan Szczygło, born on 20 October 1895, senior officer of the State Police, married.

2. [Date and circumstances of the arrest:]

I was interned in Lithuania from 19 September 1939 in the camp of Palanga and Vilkaviškis; there was no forced labor. I stayed in the USSR in the camp from 12 July 1940 to 24 August 1941.

3. [Name of the camp, prison or place of forced labor:]

I did forced labor in the USSR in the camp of Kozelsk and on the Kola Peninsula.

4. [Description of the camp, prison:]

In the Lithuanian camps, the accommodations, area and hygiene were good. The buildings where the internees lived were usually wooden and reasonably well heated in winter. In the USSR camps in Kozelsk, the housing conditions were very bad because there were at least 150 people living in wooden houses, while brick buildings – former Eastern Orthodox churches – were occupied by up to 500 people. The housing conditions and hygiene were completely neglected. On the Kola Peninsula, the housing conditions were completely impossible for people to live in because some of us had to sleep in tents and others under the open sky.

5. [Social composition of prisoners, POWs, deportees:]

There were about 2000 internees in that camp, Polish soldiers and police officers. Their moral standing was depressing.

6. [Life in the camp, prison:]

The life in the USSR camps was as follows: 12 hours of work per day, without any rest or remuneration; food – from 60 to 150 grams of bread a day and soup twice a day, usually fish soup. Some prisoners received clothes and shoes, while others wore their own. There was no education or cultural life whatsoever.

7. [Attitude of the authorities, the NKVD, towards Poles:]

The behavior of the NKVD towards Poles was simply impossible. They would summon Poles for interrogation (usually at night) and constantly ask why people in Poland were fighting communism and beating people. They said that we would pay for it dearly and that Poland would never exist again. They demanded that we denounce agents and informers in the police service, they promised that if we did that, we would be released from the camp and go home. They also asked where and what positions people held.

8. [Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality:]

In the Lithuanian camps, the medical assistance was good. As for the USSR, the medical aid provided in Kozelsk was acceptable, while in other camps there was none. Several of the interned soldiers died in Kozelsk, but I don't remember their names or how many there were roughly.

9. [Was it possible to keep in touch with the home country and your family? If yes, what contacts were permitted?]

On 1 November 1940 in the Kozelsk camp, the NKVD allowed us to send letters to our families and I received several letters from my family.

10. [When were you released and how did you join to the army?]

On 8 August 1941, the USSR authorities transferred us from the Kozelsk camp to the camp in Suzdal, where on 24 August I appeared before a draft board and was declared fit for service. That day, I joined the 5th Division in Tatishchev, and then on 5 January 1942, I was transferred to the 1st Krechowce Uhlan Regiment. On 1 April 1942, we arrived in Persia, while on 13 May we came to Palestine and made a stop in the Baszyt-Gedera camp. On 24 May 1942 together with the 1st Krechowce Uhlan Regiment, I was appointed to a gendarmerie school, and afterwards I stayed in the Gedera gendarmerie platoon, where I am currently serving as a gendarme.