

PAULINA LESZCZYŃSKA

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

Paulina Leszczyńska, staff platoon volunteer, born on 20 August 1901, Bereźnica Szlachecka, Kałusz District, Stanisławów Voivodeship, married.

Date and circumstances of arrest:

I was deported on 10 February 1940 from the Studzianki-Kolonia village.

Name of the camp (prison – forced labor site):

Arkhangelsk Oblast, settlement of Kamenka, I worked in the forest.

Description of the camp or prison (grounds, buildings, housing conditions, hygiene):

The camp was located in the forest, the barracks were old, full of holes, cold and dirty. Plenty of bedbugs, so it was impossible to sleep.

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

In this camp there were 100 families, approx. 520 people, including 20 Ukrainian families.

Life in the camp or prison (daily routine, work conditions, quotas, wages, food, clothing, social and cultural life, etc.):

The life in the camp was very hard, because all you could get to eat was a smelly fish soup and 400 grams of bread. The work was very hard – in the forests, in snow, so that it was impossible to meet the quotas and we hardly even earned anything. Clothes were also difficult to get.

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 towards us, Poles, was very unpleasant and sad, because they would permanently ridicule our authorities and say that Poland was gone forever. Whoever said that Poland existed and would exist, was tortured without mercy.

Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality rate (provide the names of the deceased):

Medical assistance was very inattentive. 80 people died of exhaustion and hunger, including 15 children: Stefan Jasiński's 3 children, [children of] Stefan Kosierba from Kowacz, now from the elderly: Feliks Starczewski, Jan Jarosz, Hudzik, etc.

Was there any possibility to get in contact with one's country and family?

It was very difficult to contact our families, because letters were not delivered.

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

I was released on 28 August 1941. Amnesty. On 5 October [1941], I left for the south, in December I arrived in the Samara Oblast. On 31 March [1942], I left for Persia, and my husband and three sons joined the army in February 1942. I, as a military family member, joined the army in Tehran in June [1942].