

ROMAN GOGOLEWSKI

Gunner Roman Gogolewski, born in 1911, bachelor.

I was arrested by the NKVD on 16 September 1940 in Białystok.

Having spent a short time in the prison in Białystok, I was taken away to Medvezhyegorsk near Murmansk. Our camp was located in the forest. I lived in a barrack together with 150 other people. The barrack stank, and was cramped and damp. It was also full of bedbugs and other vermin. In total, there were about six thousand people in the camp, including 1,500 Poles. The rest were mostly Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Russians, Tatars, Turkmens, and even a few Germans. Relations between the Poles were generally good, but sometimes fights broke out with Soviet citizens. The fights usually resulted from thefts committed by Soviet prisoners.

We worked from dawn to dusk at the *lesopowale*, that is, we felled trees that we then had to hew and arrange in cubic meters. The daily quota was six cubic meters. The work was very hard, but the food was very poor (300 grams of bread and watery soup twice a day). We were not paid at all for the work and we were treated worse than Soviet citizens, despite the fact that we were more efficient workers.

I was interrogated by the NKVD quite often and I was frequently beaten then.

If you were sick it was very difficult to get medical help. Doctors usually came when you were already dying, so a lot of Poles died. The only names I remember are: Bielski and Lenczewski.

Throughout the time I spent in the camp, I did not receive a single letter from the home country, although I often wrote letters and I knew that my family was in Poland.

In July 1941 I was transported to Solikamsk in the Urals, where I was dismissed and released as a result of the Polish-Russian agreement on 5 September 1941. I spent the winter in

a kolkhoz. The conditions in the kolkhoz were also difficult. I lived in a small and dark Kazakh hut made of clay. I received 600 grams of corn per day and nothing else. From there, I set off to join the Polish army. On 1 March [1942], I arrived in the town of Lugovoy, where I was enlisted into the Polish Army.