

## **EDMUND JÓZEFIAK**

### **1. Personal data (name, surname, rank, age, occupation, marital status):**

Gunner Edmund Józefiak, born in 1906, trading assistant, unmarried.

### **2. Date and circumstances of arrest:**

Taken prisoner on 20 September 1939, near Włodzimierz.

### **3. Name of the camp, prison, or forced labor site:**

Camp in Zahorce estate, Dubno district, from 10 October 1939 to 2 February 1940.

Brody camp, castle, from 2 February 1940 to 8 February 1941.

Płotycze camp, castle, from 8 February to 15 May 1941.

A camp 12 kilometers outside Tarnopol, in barracks, from 15 May to 28 June 1941.

Starobilsk camp, in the USSR, tents, from 25 July to 4 September 1941.

### **4. Description of the camp, prison:**

The camp in Zahorce estate – around 1,300 soldiers, lodging in the cowsheds and stables, dark, dirty, and cramped. The following camps – no complaints.

### **5. Composition of prisoners, POWs, exiles:**

Around a thousand POWs were in the camp.

### **6. Life in the camp, prison:**

In the first camp and in the initial period in the second camp, the food rations were extremely poor; there was often sand, pebbles, insects, hairs, and cigarette butts in the meals, the bread was underbaked like clay and sour like vinegar.

Work in the first camp consisted of cleaning the roads of snow.

Work in the second camp was at road construction.

Work in the third camp was in the quarries.

Work in the fourth camp was at an airport construction site.

The work went on from dawn to dusk, every day. Remuneration was very poor, the authorities paid us only if they felt like it. For the whole period of imprisonment, I received around 250 rubles of remuneration for work.

### **7. The attitude of the local NKVD authorities towards the Poles:**

A *politruk* [political worker] would deliver propaganda talk every day (there was an impression he wanted to turn all the Poles into communists).

[We] marched out of the fourth camp on 28 June 1941 and reached Zolotonosha on 17 July 1941. Then we went by a freight train to Starobilsk, where we arrived on 25 July 1941. We marched 30–50 kilometers every day, carrying all our belongings.

Food: a handful of boiled groats and 100 grams of bread, but not every day. It wasn't a human being's life, but a slow death by starvation and dehydration. Soldiers would drop on the ground from the hunger and thirst, and a falling person would often be beaten with rifles by the NKVD men. The soldiers who stayed behind the column, half-dead from the hunger, usually never returned. After arriving in Starobilsk, everybody's arms and legs became swollen.

Newspapers: Polish-communistic, which we were sometimes given.

### **8. Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality rate:**

Medical assistance was organized by our medics; it was quite operational.

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

I received letters from my parents and from the country. Reaching Bydgoszcz from Brody would take between one and six months.

### **10. When were you released and how did you manage to join the army?**

I was released from imprisonment and accepted into the army on 1 September 1941.

Place of stay, 25 February 1943