



JULIAN GRZAŁ

1. Personal data (name, surname, rank, Field Post Office no., age, occupation, civil status):

Bombardier Julian Grzał, 36 years old, a laborer, married, Field Post Office no. 169.

2. Date and circumstances of arrest:

I was arrested on 8 August 1940, in the village of Tąkiele, while returning from German captivity.

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

The [illegible] prison in Białystok. I was tried in Brześć and thereafter deported to Russia, to the Komi Republic (Ukhta, Pechora, up in the north).

4. Description of the camp, prison, etc. (grounds, buildings, living conditions, hygiene):

The hygienic and living conditions in the camp were terrible. We lived in a wooden barrack which was full of holes, without any windows or even a floor [illegible], filthy and lice-ridden. We suffered cold and hunger, and had neither beds nor blankets to cover ourselves.

5. Social composition of POWs, prisoners, deportees (nationality, category of crimes, intellectual and moral level, mutual relations, etc.):

The majority of inmates were Poles, mainly civil servants and military men. Mutual relations between us Poles were good, however not so with the Russians. Many of the Russians were ordinary criminals and thieves.

6. Life in the camp, prison, etc. (the course of an average day, working conditions, quotas and norms, wages, food, clothing, social and cultural life):

Life in the camps and prisons was extremely difficult. Each day we would face fresh torments, and I prayed to the Lord for death. Working conditions... I will give but one example: we had to cart away 8 cubic meters of earth to a distance of 60 meters, but with the starvation-level rations this was simply impossible. If, however, you did not fulfill the quota, you would receive only 300 grams of bread and a watery fish soup.



7. Attitude of the authorities, NKVD towards Poles (methods of interrogation, torture, punishments, Communist propaganda, information about Poland, etc.):

Interrogation would always take place at night and could last a good few hours. It was normal for them to beat you – they enjoyed it – or use various refined tricks. They treated me very badly, while the weakest prisoners were treated with complete ruthlessness.

8. Medical care, hospitals, mortality rate (provide the surnames of those who perished):

Medical care was not too bad; the doctors were Poles, while the head doctor was a Russian. They tried to help people as best they could. A number of people perished, and I clearly remember the death of Władysław Łokieć.

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

I wrote to my family a few times [illegible], but didn't receive any return mail, so I had no contact with home throughout my period of detention.

10. When were you released and how did you get through to the Polish Army?

I was released towards the end of August [1941], and thereafter left for *Koziatkie*, where I worked in a kolkhoz. I later traveled to Gorchakovo and enlisted in the Polish Army.