



ADAM KARDASZ

Senior Rifleman Adam Kardasz

When the Bolsheviks entered Lwów, there began to be mass arrests and deportations of Polish families into the Russian interior. Young people rushed en masse to cross the Hungarian and Romanian borders in order to enlist in the Polish Army. Many crossed the border, but others died from Bolshevik bullets or were arrested. I was arrested while crossing the Polish-Hungarian border and taken to Woronienka, and from there to Worochta, Nadwórna and Stanisławów. During the investigation I was charged with espionage and threatened with various forms of repression. However, these were to no avail, as neither beating nor threatening with execution had any effect on me. Therefore they let it go and sentenced me under article 16.80 for illegal border crossing. On 10 June I was taken from Stanisławów to Pryluky, situated to the southeast of Kiev. I remained there until 8 September; the conditions there were better than in the prisons on Polish soil. I was sentenced to five years in prison, and I left for Odessa through Kharkiv and Moscow to Kotlas. We were treated in an inhumane manner on the way: there wasn't any water, and we received 700 grams of bread, 25 grams of sugar and a herring per day. There were machine guns and searchlights on the roofs of the wagons, and the wagons were constantly searched by *boytsy*. In Kotlas we were unloaded and ordered to sit on the ground for some three hours, although it was raining. The conditions there were horrible. Two weeks later we went by ship to Knyaz Pogost, from where we were taken to Chibyu in closed, windowless wagons, cramped and cold, as it had already been snowing. After a 5-kilometer walk we reached a gulag camp, 2nd *Neftperemysl* [oil industry]. Some of us worked in the forest, at oil wells, and housing construction. I wasn't able to meet the work quota, so I received either 700, 500, or sometimes 300 grams of bread, and for dinner some watery soup, groats, and fish or herrings.



The medical assistance was good: there were 3 *statsionars* [?]. Scurvy and leg swelling became widespread in the camp. In December, after a car accident, I fell ill. In June I fell ill with scurvy and stayed in the hospital until the amnesty.

Following the amnesty, some recruiters arrived and tried to talk us into going to Komi for work, saying that people who had been in gulag camps wouldn't be allowed to join the army. However, we had two guardian angels: Father Szulmiński and Mr. Górszyt, a political activist who had worked in the Ministry of Agriculture in Warsaw.

We made a list of those in favor of joining the army. There were more than a thousand names on the list; over a hundred Jews and Ukrainians left for labor. We chipped in for a cable to General Anders, MP Retinger and the English ambassador. We got our own way; we didn't receive an answer to the cable, though, as two days later we went to Chibyu. However, they didn't let the priest go; he died two days after our departure, poor soul. On 8 September 1941 we left for Totskoye, having received 75 rubles and 2 kilograms of bread for five days; in actual fact, it took us 13 days to travel there.

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