

## WŁADYSŁAW STASIAK

Władysław Stasiak, born in 1900, fitter, married.

---

I was arrested on suspicion of espionage on 1 October 1939, while working at the proving ground in Trauguttowo. I was placed in prison (Brygidki) in Brześć nad Bugiem, where I stayed for a year and three months. In this prison, there were only Poles. I was interrogated every day for a month. During the interrogations, which usually took place at midnight, the NKVD used various ways to intimidate me: they shot a revolver behind my back and threatened me with beating and even killing me. Forty of us slept on the bare cement floor in a cell designed for six people. Nourishment and medical care were very poor. Each prisoner was infested with lice, which we collected in bottles. We could not wash our underwear at all. They treated prisoners extremely badly, insulting us with all sorts of obscene words. They did not give any clothes to anyone. [Mutual] relations between the Polish inmates were very good.

In December 1940, they took us from Brześć to Medvezhya Gora [Medvezhyegorsk] at the border with Finland. They took sick and crippled people on the transport too. The handling of prisoners by escorts was very bad during transfer; neither food nor water was given, and they beat prisoners. Travel in such harsh conditions lasted for about three weeks. [Upon arrival] in Medvezhya Gora, they pushed 120 prisoners into baths and kept us there for four days on the wet ground. Thereafter, we were sent to a camp 35 km away from Medvezhya Gora, making the journey on foot in snow and frost.

The camp was located in the forest. The barracks were dirty, full of bed bugs, and [infested with] other vermin. We slept on bunks – bare wooden boards. Nourishment was bad: [we were given] water, a bit of kasha, and occasionally horse meat. They did not give [us] any clothes. In the absence of shoes, prisoners worked with their legs wrapped in rags. The work in the forest was hard – 14 hours a day without any days off. No one could meet the imposed quotas.

Prisoners suffered from various diseases and many died. I don't remember the names of the dead. The head of the camp was constantly telling us that we wouldn't see Poland again.

I received no messages from my family.

With the beginning of war between Germany and Finland, all prisoners – about 5,000 – were taken from the camp and we were forced to walk on foot, under escort, for a month far into Russia. During the journey, we were given 400 grams of bread and herring to eat per day. It was difficult to get water.

After a month of travel, they put us in a camp – I cannot remember the name. After a few days, they released all of us Poles. From the last camp, I went to a kolkhoz [collective-owned farm] where I worked for three months. On 5 February 1942, I joined the Polish Army in Guzar.