

KAROL SZWARC

Rifleman Karol Szwarc, 45 years old, steelworker, residing in Świętochowice, Upper Silesia, married, Roman Catholic.

On 20 September I was taken prisoner in Włodzimierz and I was driven on foot, together with my companions, to Lutsk. They treated us like cattle, didn't give us any food, and were stingy even with water. In Lutsk, [we were given] two Polish rusks and one small can of meat for 20 people.

On the second day, they loaded us into train cars – there were so many people inside that we could not even sit down – and they took us to Shepetivka, again without any food. In Shepetivka, they gave us food once a day. After nine days, they drove us back and I ended up in Busk, where I experienced the full bitterness of Russian captivity. The most terrible thing was the plague of lice we had there. In such conditions, I fell ill so seriously that they had to take me – together with my sick colleagues – to the hospital in Brody, where I stayed for eight months. Two of the seven patients who had been brought there died. After I was released from the hospital, I was no longer able to do anything – I became an automaton with which they did what they wanted.

When the German-Russian war broke out, they drove us to Russia. The journey was so terrible that it was just beyond comprehension. Woe to those who collapsed from exhaustion; we never saw them again. They made a wreck out of me and I lost my mind. Although the conditions in Guzar were not bad, it was only here, in these parts, where I no longer see those scoundrels, that I regained some health and strength. And I swear to God, I would rather kill myself than go to Russia again.