

EUGENIUSZ JARZĄBEK

1. Personal data (name, surname, rank, age, profession, marital status):

Bombardier Eugeniusz Jarząbek, 32 years old, farmer, single.

2. Dates and circumstances of arrest:

I was arrested on 10 February 1940, along with my whole family.

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

The place I was exiled to was called Arkhangelsk Oblast, Vinogradovsky *raion*, *poselok* Szobenia [?], working *uchastek* Jorgus. Work in the forest industry (tree logging and piling up).

4. Description of a camp, prison:

Our worksite in the forests of the Arkhangelsk Oblast was the worst kind of place. It was surrounded by forests and impassable swamps; in other words, it was a country full of lakes, forests, rivers, and various impenetrable places. There were wooden buildings which were constructed in a European style. Living conditions were impossibly hard: hunger, misery, overwhelming work, dirty living space full of bedbugs, lice, and all other bugs. Hygiene was below criticism.

5. Compositions of prisoners, POWs, exiles:

The composition of POWs was as follows: 40 families of Polish exiles, excluding Byelorussians and Ukrainians. People of Polish nationality were exiled for the fact that they were settlers in Polesie. Intellectual standing was quite [illegible]. Moral standing was almost barbaric. Mutual relations were average.

6. Life in the camp, prison:

Life in the free exile was absolutely poverty-ridden. The work was beyond our capabilities from day one until the very end. The working quota was impossible to attain: 10 cubic meters

of wood for every person had to be piled up to fill the quota. Remuneration was scanty. Food: bread and water. We wore our own clothes, and those who didn't have any had to walk in rags. Mutual relations were filled with animosity. Cultural life was on a very low level.

7. Attitude of the local NKVD towards the Poles:

The attitude of the authorities was very rigid and vicious [towards Poles]. They had cruel ways of interrogation, beating us with rubber martinets and touching red-hot iron against our feet. The fines were extremely high. The communist propaganda was absolutely dumb and ridiculous; information about Poland was misstated.

8. Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality:

Minimal medical assistance; hospitals were far away. Mortality wasn't high.

9. Was there a possibility to contact one's country and family?

People had contact with the country, but not all of them – only the ones whose relatives were back there.

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

I released myself from free exile on 2 November 1941. I joined the Polish Army on 27 February 1942.