

JÓZEF GRABOWSKI

Gdańsk-Wrzeszcz, 28 September 1989

Józef Grabowski

[...]

Editorial Office of the Catholic weekly "Zorza"
Warsaw

Pursuant to the appeal published in no. 12/89, below please find the personal details of my Father, Franciszek Grabowski, who was reported missing in the USSR during the Second World War, and also responses to the questions posed:

Franciszek Grabowski, son of Józef and Leokadia *née* Olszewska, born on 15 January 1884 in Gąbin, district of Gostynin, Warsaw Voivodeship.

Hrubieszów, Lublin Voivodeship.

Three-year Russian municipal school, acquired profession – ladies' shoemaker, served in the Polish State Police from 10 February 1919 to September 1939.

A Lance Corporal of the Russian Army, and a reservist in the Polish Army. A Senior Constable of the State Police (station in Hrubieszów, Lublin Voivodeship) from 1938.

Arrested at home in the beginning of October 1939 by a group of armed civilians of Jewish nationality who wore red armbands, and handed over to the Soviet command of the city. Despite the submission of written petitions (signed by some two thousand people) by residents of the city calling for my Father's release, for he was well respected by them, and assurances given by the municipal commandant to the effect that *zawtra budiet swobodnyj* [you will be free tomorrow], towards the end of October 1939 he was deported deep into the USSR in a cattle wagon along with a group of ranking police officers, teachers, priests and civil servants (more than one hundred persons in total).

Towards the end of January 1940 we received a postcard that had been written on 1 January 1940 in the prisoner of war camp of Ostashkov, *Kalinin Oblast*, post office box no. 31. The

card had been written in Russian by a co-prisoner, and my Father had only signed it, for they had taken his glasses (and also his commemorative silver watch) and he had been unable to write it himself. Although we sent several letters to the above address, we never heard from him again. A search conducted by the International Red Cross turned up fruitless.

While serving in the Polish Army (the First Army) in the years 1944–1946 together with Soviet citizens of Polish origin, I heard a number of different versions how the camp in Ostashkov had been liquidated, among others that the prisoners:

were drowned in the White Sea in the spring of 1940, or

were executed en masse, like in Katyn, in the spring of 1940 at an unknown killing ground.

Submitted by: Józef Grabowski, resident [in] Gdańsk-Wrzeszcz, [...], son of Franciszek Grabowski, reported missing.

PS We are eternally grateful to you for the actions which you have undertaken to commemorate people – Poles who fought, successfully, for a Sovereign Poland and [died] for the Homeland at the hands of criminals who have not been brought to justice to date.

Józef Grabowski with his children, grandchildren and friends!