



## ALEKSANDER GOŁOST

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Platoon Sergeant Aleksander Gołost, born on 5 December 1902, assigned to the 1st Supply Company.

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[I was arrested] after crossing the Lithuanian border on 19 September 1939 together with my unit, stationed at Commissary Materials Depot No. 12 in Wilno, whereafter I was moved between various internee camps in Lithuania until 12 July 1940.

On 12 July 1940, while I was in the internee camp in Vilkaviškis, the Bolsheviks, having replaced the Lithuanian camp guards with their own soldiers a few days previously, took over the internees and immediately set about organizing us into companies. Under a strong escort, comprising soldiers on foot and horseback, aided by dogs, and having been warned that if any one of us stepped out of line they would be fired upon without forewarning, we were led to the train station, where they loaded us onto goods wagons destined for Russia. The voyage: the wagons were terribly overcrowded and the heat stifling. We had our own food, but no one touched it because we were completely deprived of water; worse still, the Soviets didn't give us any water during stops – even though we asked them to. We passed through Wilno and arrived in Mołodeczno, where in the evening the Bolsheviks carried out a selection: they took the officers, priests, policemen and functionaries of the Border Protection Corps, while we – the rank and file – were loaded onto a different train, which set off on its way in the morning. Our thirst was so great that when further along the route, in the USSR, it started raining, we all tried to catch a few droplets so as to moisten our lips. Some of us tried to catch the rain running down the dirty wagon walls with spoons, and those who succeeded in gathering even half a measureful of the precious liquid were happy indeed.

Having reached our destination, we were driven on foot from the train station for over 30 kilometers to the camp of Yuchново, which we reached on 16 July 1940. There we met



a small group of Polish soldiers who had been deported earlier. After a body search, we were let into the camp, where we received hot food and boiled water. We slept in the open, in the square. The next day we were sent to buildings, which were equipped with plank beds.

At this point the NKVD took over, writing down our personal details, inquiring as to who we were in Poland, where we worked, and to what social organizations we belonged. They were particularly interested in finding members of the OZON [Camp of National Unity].

The so-called political indoctrinators implemented a strong propaganda campaign, talking about the political system of the USSR, the country's might, etc., on every occasion, and stressing that Poland had ceased to exist for good. The attitude of Bolsheviks from the camp administration towards the internees was, I would say, courteous to the extreme, while the guards were ruthless and, indeed, savage. A day room was set up, and we also had a cinema, although this was used solely to disseminate propaganda. The library contained only Soviet newspapers and books on politics.

Our work consisted in building new barracks around the camp, cleaning the sewer ditches, digging sewage pits, and constructing a larger building, which was supposed to house a second day room. Some of the internees organized a string orchestra and a choir. In the summer of 1941 (I do not remember the month) I was sent through Murmansk to the far north, right up to the Kola Peninsula.

The train journey was very difficult. In the main, we were fed with salty fish and herrings, and were given very little water. The wagons were searched frequently. Our escort was despicable – brutal and pitiless. The journey by ship was terrible, we literally lay one on top of the other in the cargo hold. It lasted for a week or so. During the last few days we were not given any food, for there was a storm and they found it difficult to unload us. Exhausted and famished, we got out onto the shore. The Soviets drove us on foot to the camp, which was already staffed with police. There were no tents – we had to set them up ourselves. There was a big shortage of food, and especially bread, of which we received no more than 100 – 150 grams. We were taken to work in the port, and thereafter some 20 kilometers further, deep into the snow-covered desert, where an airfield was being built. The work was hard, and we had absolutely no bread. The living conditions were simply atrocious, seeing as we were forced to sleep on the bare ground, which was cold and wet. The Bolsheviks treated us mercilessly



and brutally. We did not stay there long, for only 10 – 12 days after our arrival we were sent back to the shore and loaded onto another ship, which took us across the White Sea to Arkhangelsk. From there we traveled by train to the camp in Vyazniki, where we were visited by Colonel Sulik-Sarnowski, and the Soviet guard was finally removed. After enlisting in the Polish Army, I left for Tatishchevo, where I served in the field bakery of the 5th Infantry Division. I arrived in Persia on 5 April 1942.

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