



# CZESŁAW KRÓL

## 1. Personal data:

Platoon Leader Czesław Król, professional non-commissioned officer with the Border Protection Corps, born in 1902, married.

## 2. How did you end up in Russia:

Acting upon an order given by Colonel Świątkowski, commander of the "Głębokie" Border Protection Corps, together with my regiment, on 21 September 1939 I crossed the Polish-Latvian border in Semigallia. The Latvian authorities disarmed and interned us. On 28 August 1940, after they had occupied Latvia, the Soviet authorities deported us to the Smolensk Oblast, Yukhnovsky District. We were kept in stables there, and we were promptly taken for interrogation.

## 3. Methods of interrogating and torturing the arrestee during investigation:

I was interrogated by the NKVD authorities from Yukhnov, who used the following methods:

- a) appealing to the prisoner to tell the truth, which would diminish his "guilt" or even result in release;
- b) interrogating at night: the prisoner was woken up and interrogated for a few hours, during which he had to remain standing, under a bright electrical light (about 300 Watts), which quickly led to exhaustion;
- c) punching in the face with fists: this is how I lost two teeth.

## 4. Ruling in absentia, means of delivering verdicts:

I wasn't served an indictment and there was no trial, but a ruling in absentia was given and I was sentenced to eight years of forced labor for serving in the Polish army. I didn't receive a copy of the ruling nor had I any access to the "incriminating" material.

## 5. Life in the forced labor camps:

- a) place and grounds: Yukhnov, Murmansk, Kola Peninsula, Arkhangelsk and Suzdal. Tundra, with rocky desert in some places (Kola Peninsula); everywhere there were billions of mosquitoes and virulent midges.



- b) living conditions: In Yukhnov we were in a stable, and in other places in the open air.  
We slept on the ground on beds made of heather, with our own clothes for cover.
- c) food: In Yukhnov – 700 grams of bread and three fourths of a liter of soup twice a day.  
The soup was either with kasha or potatoes, boiled from fish. In the Kola Peninsula – 200 grams of bread and soup twice a day, made either of wholemeal flour or bran.
- d) working conditions: We worked at road construction on rocky ground (Kola Peninsula) or swampy ground (Yukhnov), with no rest (no days off) and regardless of rain, sleet, blizzard or frost.
- e) work quotas: There were no quotas.
- f) working time: In Yukhnov 8 hours, in the Kola Peninsula 12 hours per day.
- g) clothing: I received one change of underwear, a padded jacket, quilted trousers and a quilted cap with ear flaps. I didn't receive any shoes.
- h) hygienic and sanitary conditions: Medical assistance was provided by good specialists, Polish citizens, but they didn't have enough medicaments at their disposal, either for treating or preventing diseases, and disinfectants were missing as well. We didn't take baths, which resulted in filth and lice.
- i) diversions and cultural life: None.
- j) contact with the home country: I had none, because my family had been deported.
- k) remuneration: None.
- l) The authorities guarding us Poles treated us badly, and generally they were hostile towards us.
- m) mortality at the camp: At first it was rather low, but then it increased significantly; it was at its highest after we were released.
- n) Communist propaganda: Every second day, a Communist propaganda movie was screened, and there were meetings three times a week during which the power of the USSR was juxtaposed with the "powerlessness" of the Polish state, the audience was presented with the "torments" which the national minorities had suffered at the hands of the Polish authorities, and the "unfairness" of the Polish government towards Ukrainians, Belarusians and Jews was emphasized; a number of other issues were also addressed. They tried to prove that Poland would never be restored, and moreover they criticized the former government of the Polish Republic. By way of example, a brochure was published in which there was the following picture: General Sikorski, having left his shoes and saber in Warsaw, and his gloves and cap in France, runs away down some other road;



the caption read, "Where to now?" Or another illustrated brochure: Churchill in the official gallery, surrounded by his staff and generals; next to them, English soldiers are beaten and impaled with the bayonets of the Soviet troops.