

Survivor Edi Weinstein on Death Pits in Treblinka

The other workers were nearly finished with the job of clearing all the corpses from the platform. Some of the bodies had lain there for ten days and were in an advanced state of decomposition. Armed guards patrolled among us. SS men kept showing up to pick a few of us out of the rest and lead them to the edge of the huge cremation pit. There the victims were ordered to disrobe and stand facing the pit. Then they were shot to death. At first, each of the victims had to drag the body of his predecessor into the pit; his reward, when he climbed out, was a bullet. Anyone who pleaded for his life was ordered to lie on the ground and absorbed a terrible beating before being shot. Most of these people, however, had become too indifferent to ask for mercy, knowing that that virtue had lapsed from the world. Brutal and untrammelled murder had become so routine that any German or Ukrainian might kill at any time. I do not remember a single case in which a person selected at random in this fashion was allowed to live for even a short while.

Source: Edi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel. The Story of an Escape From Treblinka*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 2002, pp. 50- 51.