

## Survivor Edi Weinstein on being Liberated by Russian Soldiers

Just then, the firing resumed, but heavier than before. We crossed the main road again, this time near a burning tank, and climbed onto a high embankment. After running about 300 yards, we realized that we had no chance of surviving here. We climbed down from the embankment and ran toward the creek that separated us from Chuchleby. We lay there for about an hour until the shooting stopped. Looking up, we saw five soldiers at the top of the hill, clutching machine guns primed for use. Their uniforms were different from those of the Germans—Russian, I presumed. The soldiers came down the slope, apparently intending to ford the stream. I stood up and shouted at them in Polish: they could get across by stepping on stones. I made my point with the help of sign language. An officer followed by four soldiers crossed the shallow creek and listened to what I was saying.

“Where have the Germans gone?” the officer asked.

Father could not restrain himself any longer. He raced toward them, shouting, “*Wy, Ruskiye?*”—“You are Russians?”—and kissed and hugged them. The Red Army had already occupied the estate and the town, they said. Without hesitation, they led us to the farm, where a Russian officer gave us a cordial welcome, ordered his soldiers to feed us, and asked who we were.

“We are Jews who have been hiding from the Germans,” Father replied in Russian.

This first encounter with the Russians, which assured us our freedom, took place near the village of Chuchleby, next to Kaluza Creek. It was about 2 o’clock on Monday afternoon, July 31, 1944. I will always consider this date as meaningful as the day of my birth. Father felt the same way: when people asked him how old he was, he used to say he was born on July 31, 1944.

**Source: Edi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel. The Story of an Escape From Treblinka*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 2002, pp. 140-141.**

