

ANTONINA STRZĘBAŁA

Warsaw, 30 April 1946. Judge Halina Wereńko, delegated to the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the gravity of the oath, the judge swore the witness in accordance with Art. 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Antonina Strzabała, monastic name Sister Salomea
Names of parents	Tomasz and Maria née Frok
Date of birth	17 October 1902
Occupation	Sister of the Good Samaritan
Education	seven grades of elementary school
Place of residence	Pruszków [...]
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic

I belong to the Convent of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. From 1927 I worked in St Lazarus Hospital as a nurse. When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, St Lazarus Hospital was located at Wolska Street 18 and at Leszno Street 127. I worked in the main building from the side of Leszno Street.

During the first days of August, the hospital was on the Polish side. The insurgents came around to visit their wounded and [see] about supplies.

The insurgents did not wage any military action from the hospital grounds. I once saw a young man shooting at German soldiers from a balcony.

I am unable to determine the total number of sick and wounded patients that were in the hospital.

Civilians from nearby houses also sought shelter in the hospital. After the liquidation of the hospital I heard that we had had over one thousand civilians in the hospital.

On 5 August 1944, in the evening, the insurgents retreated through the hospital, and immediately after that German troops entered.

I don't know what division these troops belonged to. I noticed that many soldiers spoke Russian or Ukrainian.

The first German troop entered from the side of Wolska Street and through the window into the safety shelter under hospital building A. There were around five hundred people in the safety shelter – patients, civilians and staff. Soldiers threw grenades at the people in the safety shelter, murdering them. The following people managed to escape from the safety shelter and told us about the execution: the wife of a hospital clerk, Ziemińska, with her daughter; a physical worker Władysława (I don't know her surname); two sick boys (I don't know any of the addresses); and Nurse Maria Smolarska (presently in Częstochowa). From building A, the German soldiers rushed into building E and the supplies pavilion.

In building E, in the safety shelter, there were around forty insurgents and around eighteen street women infected with venereal diseases, Dr Szymańska, six Sisters of the Good Samaritan (Edwarda Drozdowska, Ernesta Kawecka, Teofila Węckowska, Rozalia, Hipolita and Prudencja, whose surnames I do not know), a few nurses – I remember the following names of the nurses: Maria Chodakowska, Zofia Rutkowska, Irena Rutkowska and Miss Kowalczyk. The soldiers murdered everyone except for one woman with a venereal disease, whose name and address I don't know. The patient recounted that after the soldiers burst into the safety shelter, they ordered everyone who could walk to get out. After everyone did, they were executed in front of the wall between building E and the supplies building.

People who remained in the safety shelter were murdered with grenades.

On 10 August 1944, I inspected the corpses of the wounded in the basement. Some of them lay on cabbage barrels, other were lying on their backs, covering their heads with their arms, others had lacerated wounds from grenade shrapnel.

Civilians from the building located opposite pavilion E, where around twelve employee families lived, were executed against a wall.

I don't know how many people were executed there, and in what circumstances. At night, when I was taken from the hospital with a group of medical staff, as we were passing the buildings we were walking on corpses.

Pharmacist Ignacy Giedroyć was murdered in the hospital dispensary. Then the Germans burst into the building marked with the letter K, facing Leszno Street. The hospital office, the management board and the kitchens were located there. In the basements, there were laundry rooms, food storage, an operating theatre for minors, an internal urology room and an X-ray room.

When the Germans entered, I was in the dressing room. On that day, the wounded patients, with the exception of two who did not agree to being taken from the upper floor, were carried down to the safety shelters. A group of civilians was also there. It was therefore crowded and in total there were more than five hundred of us. When the German soldiers came running with grenades towards the safety shelter windows, eight wounded Germans who were lying in our room started to shout at them that they should get inside and not throw grenades. Then the Germans burst into the safety shelter, very excited, shouting that everyone present should put their hands up. The wounded German soldiers were yelling to spare the medical staff, who had taken good care of them. Then the arriving German soldiers ordered everyone who was able to walk to get out and to take the wounded with them. Only severely injured Poles and a group of around thirty children, some of them with their mothers, stayed in the safety shelter. When I went with the group of those who were able to walk into the yard, I saw that the German soldiers were throwing grenades through the safety shelter windows.

As far as I know, no one who stayed in that basement survived.

In front of the house, the soldiers grouped the gathered people in threes, separating out the sanitary personnel. Then they took the groups of three to a wall from the side of Karolkowa Street. And then I heard shots.

I did not see the execution site; neither did I see whether the groups of three formed before the execution were taken into a basement. I saw individual people being singled out on sight and executed near the laundry.

At around midnight the group of people that were still alive, numbering around ninety people, was led through the dispensary, where one of the soldiers told us in German that they would spare our lives due to the intercession of the wounded German soldiers.

Standing near the dispensary, I heard the shooting and screaming of those being executed in building E. At one point the soldiers chose three women and three men from our group and executed them. They took away one ward sister and one nurse to the warehouse, robbing them of their clothes. The remaining group, numbering fifty-three people, was herded by the Germans to St Stanislaus Hospital.

I remember only a few names of the people who had been murdered in the evening of 5 August 1944 in the hospital. A physical worker, Piotr Skrajny, with his daughter Teresa and his wife (I don't remember her name), carpenter Antoni Kotlicki with his daughter Krystyna and his wife (I don't remember her name), locksmith Józef Jusiński with his wife and son, hospital supplies manager Wacław Emczyński with his wife, chef Henryk Ziemiński, hospital physical workers Dobosz, Stark and Kubicki.

At that the report was concluded and read out.