

# Deseret News

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## Accidental hero: Human kindness in the midst of Holocaust horror

By Joseph Walker , Deseret News

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Jerry Meents pins on the original star that he received as a 12-year-old Jewish boy living in Amsterdam in 1942 at the Holocaust Memorial Commemoration at the Salt Lake City Library on April 13, 2007. Six million Jews died during the Holocaust between 1933 and 1945. (Laura Seitz, Deseret News)

Morton (Miksa) Fuchs never thought of himself as a Holocaust survivor.

At least, that is what he told his two children, Marta and Henry, both of whom were born during the post-World War II baby boom.

"I was only in labor camp," Marta remembers hearing her father say. "It's your mother who is the survivor."

Marta's mother, Ilona, endured the horrors of Auschwitz, where her parents as well as nine members of Morton's family were among the 1.3 million people who died there during the mid-20th century genocide that resulted in the death of two-thirds of Nazi Germany's 9 million-member Jewish population.

The victims of the Shoah, the Hebrew word for "holocaust," are remembered each year at this time during Yom HaShoah, a national memorial day in Israel that is also observed by devout Jews around the world. This year Yom HaShoah falls on Monday, April 8. Although there is no formal ritual for the observance there will be solemn ceremonies that may include the lighting of memorial candles and the reciting of the Kaddish, the prayer for the departed, to help all who participate remember the victims of the Nazi regime's institutional intolerance and Adolf Hitler's "final solution" — both those who died and those who survived.