

With great sadness CANDLES announces the death of Menachem Bodner on February 18th 2015.

Menachem was in the midst of an extraordinary personal journey to find his twin brother, Jenó, during which he discovered his real name, the relatives he never met, and his parents' identities.

Menachem Bodner, born Elias Gottesman in the village of Stroino, Hungary (now part of Ukraine), was four-and-a-half years old when Auschwitz was liberated in January 1945. Somehow in the chaos, he and his twin brother were separated. Menachem remembers a man striding toward him, and he asked the man if he would be his father. Maurycy Bodner picked him up and carried him from the camp. Bodner adopted Elias and named him Menachem Bodner. They began a new life in Israel, where Menachem lived for the rest of his life. Maurycy tried to locate Menachem's birth parents, but had no success.



The Bodner family (Menachem is second from the right)

In 2012, urged by his wife and grandchildren, Menachem reignited the search for his twin brother. Genealogist Ayana KimRon responded to an internet post made by Menachem on a family roots forum. Together they created a [Facebook page](#) titled, "[A 7734: Looking for twin brother Jenó \(Jolli\), Auschwitz/Mengele survivor.](#)" A 7734 is Jenó's tattoo number. The page has been viewed over one million times and has offered many clues to Menachem's past, but no news yet of Jenó.

In October 2014, thanks to a DNA test and research of his roots in the United States, Menachem discovered cousins in California he never knew he had. One cousin even had a photo of Menachem's parents—the first image he had seen since he was separated from them in Auschwitz.



Roza and Ignatz Gottesman

In January 2015, Menachem was a member of the World Jewish Congress delegation at the 70th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz. CANDLES' founding director and Mengele twin Eva Mozes Kor spent time with Menachem on January 26th and enjoyed getting to know him. "He was a gentle and sweet character," remembers Eva.



Menachem and Eva Kor, January 26, 2014, Krakow, Poland

We will always remember his kind eyes and infectious smile.



From [Facebook page "A 7734"](#)

Menachem Bodner (Elias Gottesman): A 7733

Jeno (Jolli) Gottesman: A 7734