

**[British Red Cross Society leaflet about their international tracing and message service].**

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# British Red Cross

## International Tracing and Message Service



## TRACING SERVICE

Instituted under the Geneva Conventions, this service helps bring together close relatives who have been separated by armed conflict or political upheaval. Enquiries may also arise after natural or other disasters. Enquiries of a compassionate nature are considered as well, such as those concerning persons who were prisoners or internees together, or elderly life-long friends who have recently lost touch.

**Enquiries are treated in the strictest confidence.** However, it should be borne in mind that persons sought may not wish to have contact, or give information about their whereabouts. The Red Cross must respect such wishes.

**There is no time limit on tracing enquiries.** Much of the current British Red Cross tracing work deals with cases dating back to World War II, or before. In recent years the British Red Cross has succeeded in reuniting, on average, one family every day.

**What we cannot do.** Our services are free, supported by public donations; but our resources are limited and unfortunately we cannot assist with enquiries which fall outside our guidelines. For example, we cannot accept requests for searches within the U.K., those of a genealogical nature or searches for distant relatives or friends. We cannot accept enquiries from a third party, or in connection with legal matters.



## **FAMILY MESSAGE SERVICE**

When war or other disaster strikes a country, many people are cut off from their families because normal communications have broken down. Relatives may be taken prisoner-of-war or moved to refugee camps or shelters. In these circumstances the Red Cross Message Service is often the only means for families to keep in touch. Messages are restricted to family or personal matters, and must be written on a special Red Cross Message form.

## **HEALTH REPORTS**

When close relatives abroad are ill, elderly, living alone and fail to communicate, they are perhaps in need of help; then the local Red Cross may be asked to make a home visit. Complementary to this service the Red Cross may seek, on behalf of immediate family members, information on the health and welfare of relatives who are political prisoners.

## **OTHER INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT**

Provided this is beyond the capacity of the travel operator or agent, the British Red Cross may be able to assist when an elderly or disabled person needs help, with transport, an escort, or with an item such as a wheelchair, in order to make an overseas visit. As the services and resources of the Red Cross vary from country to country, adequate notice is needed to find out whether the particular Red Cross assistance requested is available in the country concerned.

## HOW TO SEEK HELP

Contact your local British Red Cross for further information or advice or write, giving full details, to:

The International Welfare Department  
British Red Cross Society  
9 Grosvenor Crescent  
London  
SW1X 7EJ

Enquiries should normally come from a relative.

## WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

### *About you*

- Your full name and address.
- Your relationship to the person sought.
- The reason for loss of contact.
- The reason for your enquiry.

### *About the person you seek*

- Full name.
- Date and place of birth.
- Nationality.
- Last known address.
- Date and circumstances of last news.
- Family details.



## **THE RED CROSS NETWORK**

The British Red Cross can call on the services of its thousands of trained volunteers in Branches throughout the United Kingdom and in British overseas territories. They undertake local searches, make personal contact and give advice.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is worldwide. So the British Red Cross can call on national societies in most countries in the world for help.

In time of armed conflict the British Red Cross seeks the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva. The ICRC, a neutral and independent body, is able to act as an intermediary on behalf of the victims of war. So the Red Cross is able to operate its unique tracing and message services in countries which circumstances would otherwise have made inaccessible.

## **HELP US TO HELP**

The work of the British Red Cross is made possible by the voluntary services and financial support given by the British public. You can help by giving us your time, in which case you will receive free training, and/or by giving us money. Whether your time or your money, every little helps.

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