



Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center

The American Red Cross Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center is the national clearinghouse for persons seeking the fates of loved ones missing since the Holocaust and its aftermath.

While the Red Cross has been tracing victims of World War II and the Nazi regime since 1939, impetus for the creation of a special program occurred in 1989 with the Soviet Union's release of documents to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). That cache of documents, which included Auschwitz death books and hundreds of thousands of names of concentration camp victims, provided the single largest source of information made available since the end of World War II. Due to the subsequent and rapid discovery of additional Holocaust records, that source and its potential to assist survivors and their families, continues to grow dramatically.

The Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center links the person initiating a request at one of the more than 700 American Red Cross chapters with hundreds of state archives, museums and organizations throughout the world through the worldwide network of Red Cross societies and the International Tracing Service located in Arolsen, Germany. Administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the ITS is the largest repository of Nazi documentation in the world housing over 47 millions records. The American Red Cross also helps individuals in other countries locate loved ones believed to have immigrated to the US. Since opening in September 1990, the Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center has received more than 45,000 requests.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

Location and family reunification. In a small but significant number of cases, tracing activities reveal that the sought person survived WWII and family members are reunited with relatives that they formerly believed to be dead.

Closure. Survivors of the Holocaust are advancing in age and have a sense of urgency about learning the fates of relatives separated from them so long ago. Information on the fates of nearly 16,000 individuals have been documented through the Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center.

Reparations and pensions. The Center can assist in securing documentation of forced labor, forced evacuation from former Soviet territories, or internment in concentration camps required for survivors submitting claims.

HOW TO ACCESS RED CROSS HOLOCAUST TRACING AND DOCUMENTATION SERVICES

All Red Cross tracing services are free of charge. To initiate a search contact your local American Red Cross chapter <http://www.redcross.org/> or the Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center at 410-624-2090; by e-mail at hwvtc@arc-cmc.org; or by mail at 4800 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215.