INFORMATION

The C.T.A.'s most valuable commodity is information, the more accurate it is the more precious it becomes as a means of tracing a person or reuniting a family scattered by war.

The quality of the information depends of course on the source. During an international conflict, official prisoner of war lists are invaluable but

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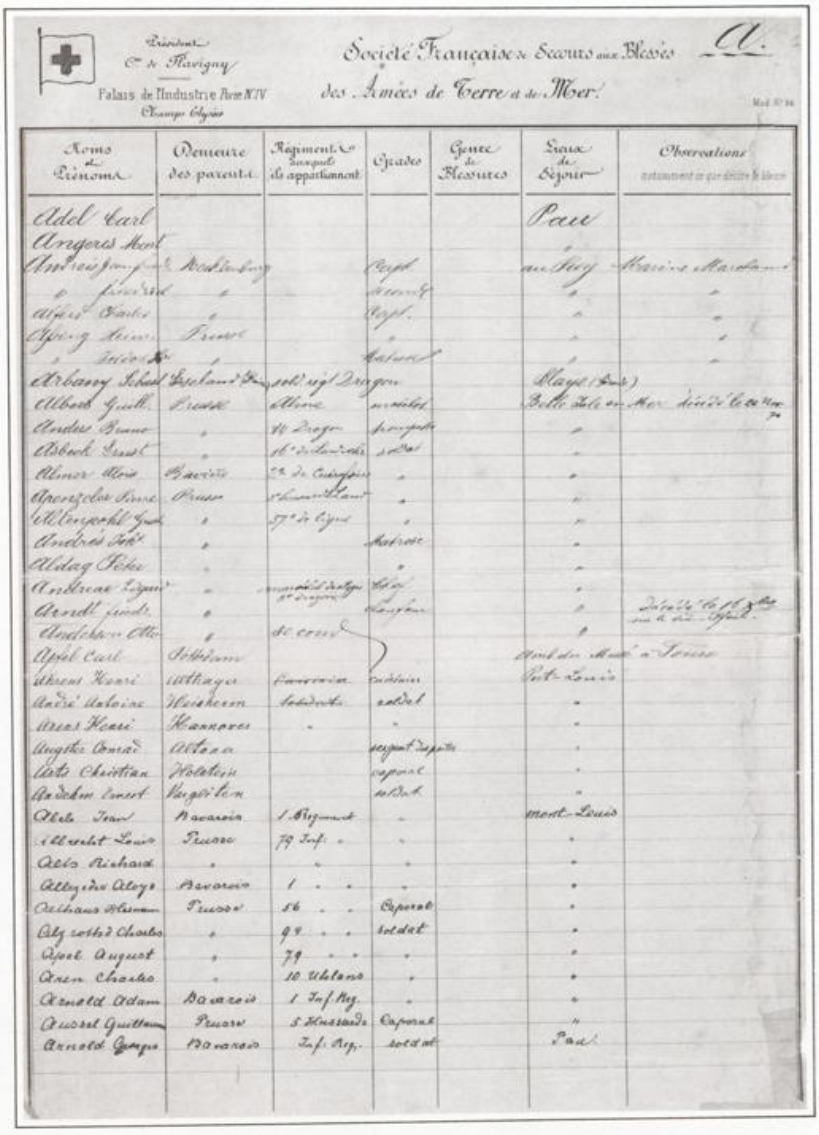

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in the case of internal conflict, the detaining authorities often do not disclose to a man's family he has been arrested. The man may show up in a list of prisoners visited by ICRC delegates, or his whereabouts may be known by a fellow inmate.

During the Second World War, a list of prisoners of war came into the hands of the Agency after it had been scribbled on a cigarette packet and thrown from a train. The Agency has always accepted information from unofficial sources, and it is treated with the utmost confidentiality.

When an item of information gathered by the Agency, for example the name of a political prisoner visited, later tallies with a tracing request then a case is solved. After the intricate network of information has proved useful in tracing someone, then any one or all of another four services are available for a war victim.