

Help for reading cards in the French Army and Belgian Army main file

CG1 E 13-01

In a nutshell ...

If the card you are interested in contains an alphanumeric reference beginning with the letter

P (most frequently used)

PB

R

†

C

FR

FS

D

BR

VFR

VR

S

Enter it in the search engine.

If not, your search stops here.

This file contains two types of cards:

1/Index cards:

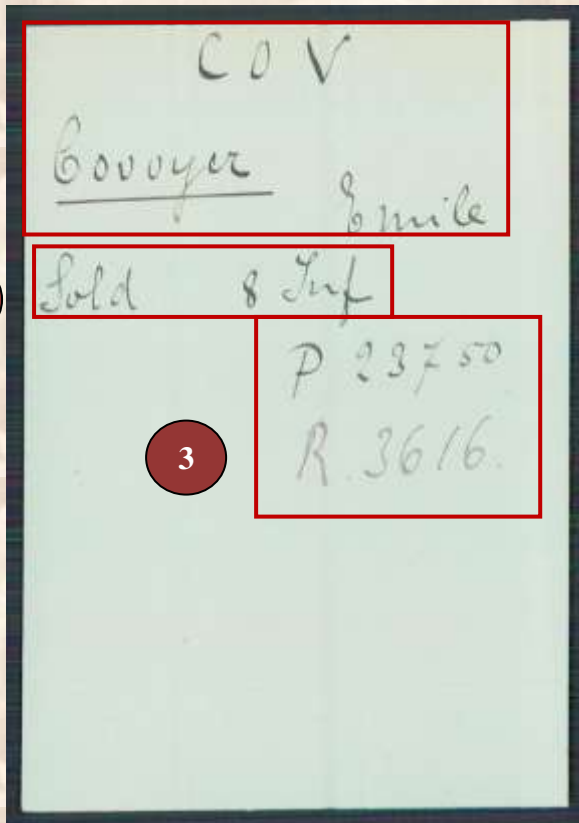
These are the cards drawn up in Geneva by the International Prisoners-of-War Agency from the lists it received from the authorities detaining the French and Belgian prisoners (in the case of this file mainly Germany)

An index card is stamped with an alphanumeric reference number which relates to the corresponding list. You have to enter this reference in the search engine. Warning, reading the reference number can

be difficult because of handwriting and badly inked stamps. In addition be careful not to mistake the alphanumeric reference for the letters and numbers that designate the military identity (for example, « RI 88 » stands for « Infantry Regiment n° 88 », this is not the list reference number !)

Certain cards can display multiple references due to the fact that the prisoners were mentioned in several different lists, for example; following a transfer from a camp or due to death in captivity (the lists of French and Belgian prisoners who died in captivity have a reference that begins with a sign †).

In the main file for the French and British military personnel, the cards are generally greenish, less frequently on white paper.



1

Surname and first name

2

Rank, Regiment

« sold » stands for « soldier »

« 8 Inf » stands for 8th Infantry Regiment

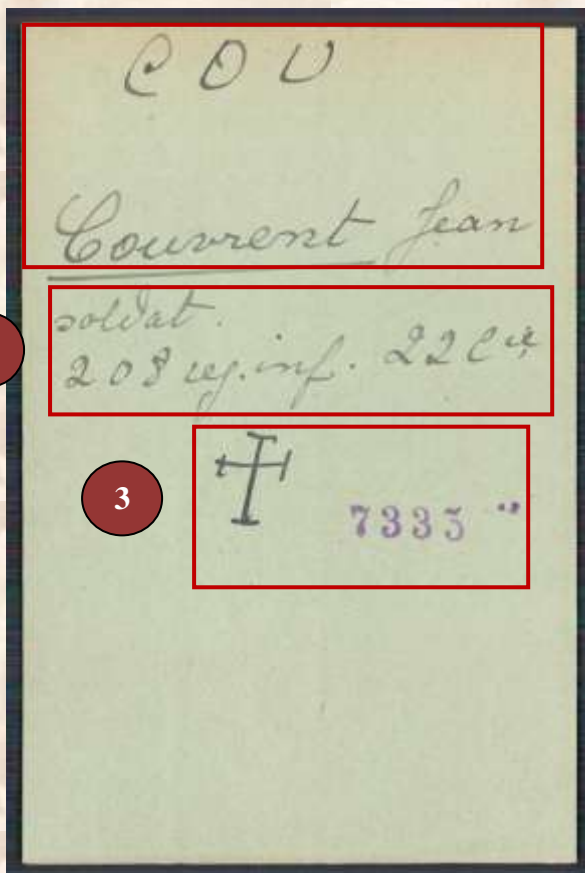
3

The 2 references to enter successively are :

P 23750

R 3616.

This soldier is mentioned in 2 different lists



1

Surname and first name

2

Rank, Regiment

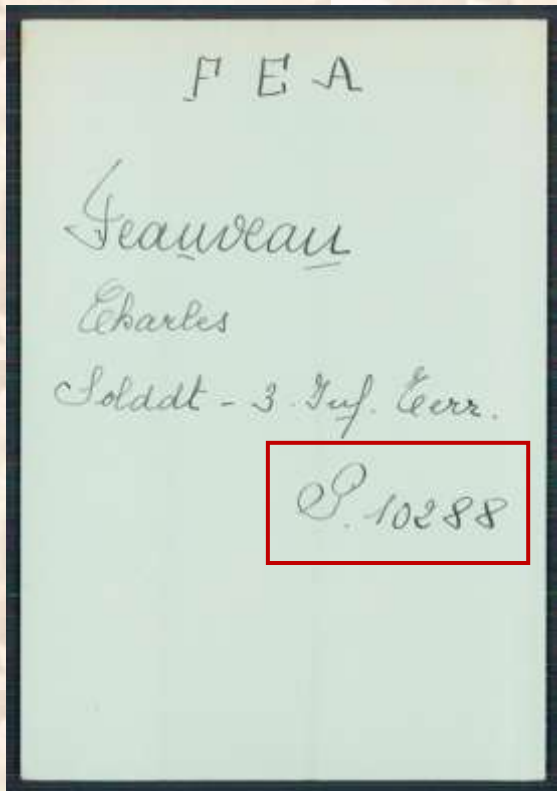
208th Infantry regiment, 22nd company

3

The reference number to enter is :

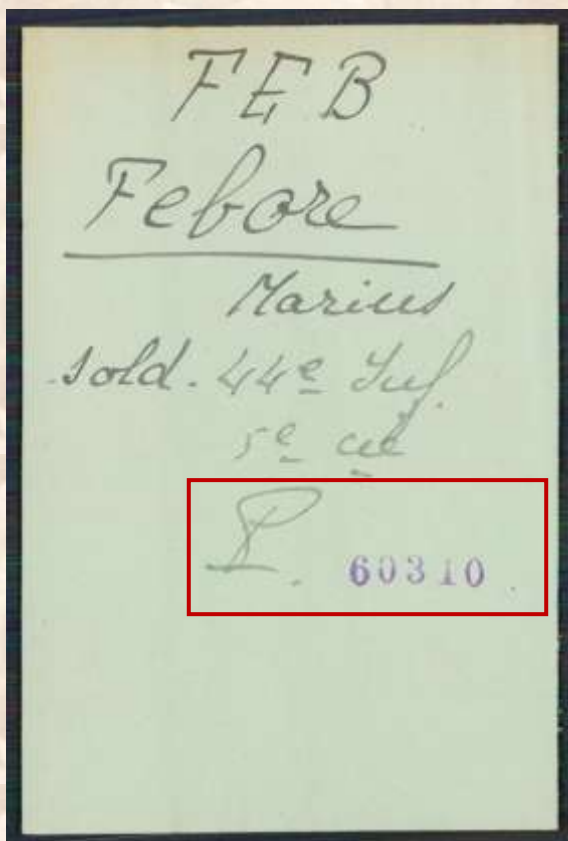
† 7335

Here are some examples of alphanumeric references, which may appear to be complicated at a first glance:



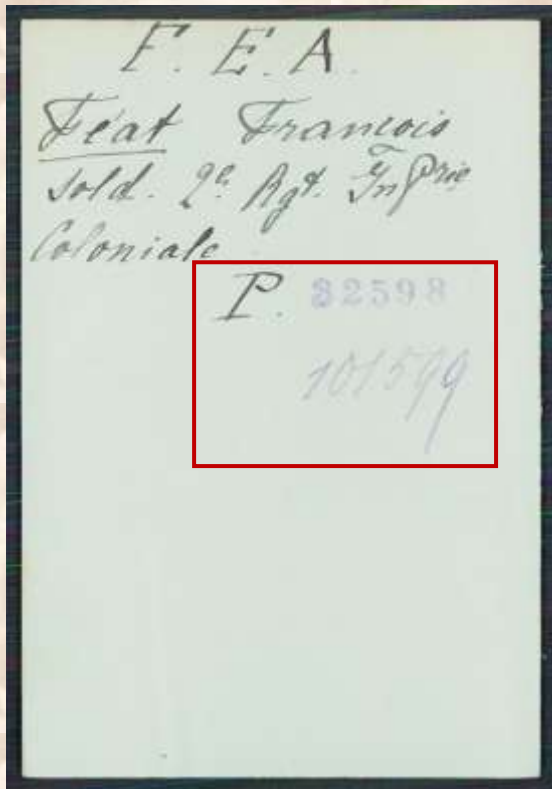
The reference number to enter into the search engine is:

P 10 288



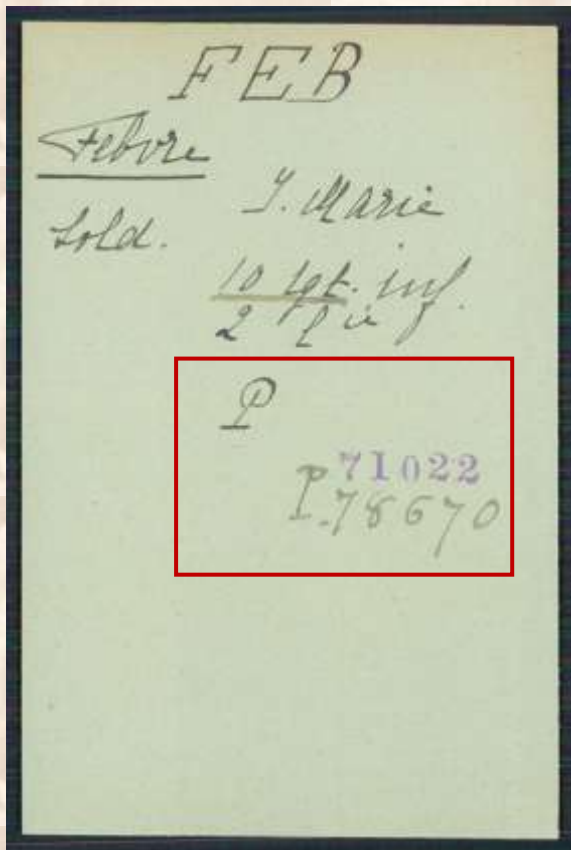
The reference number to enter into the search engine is:

P 60 310



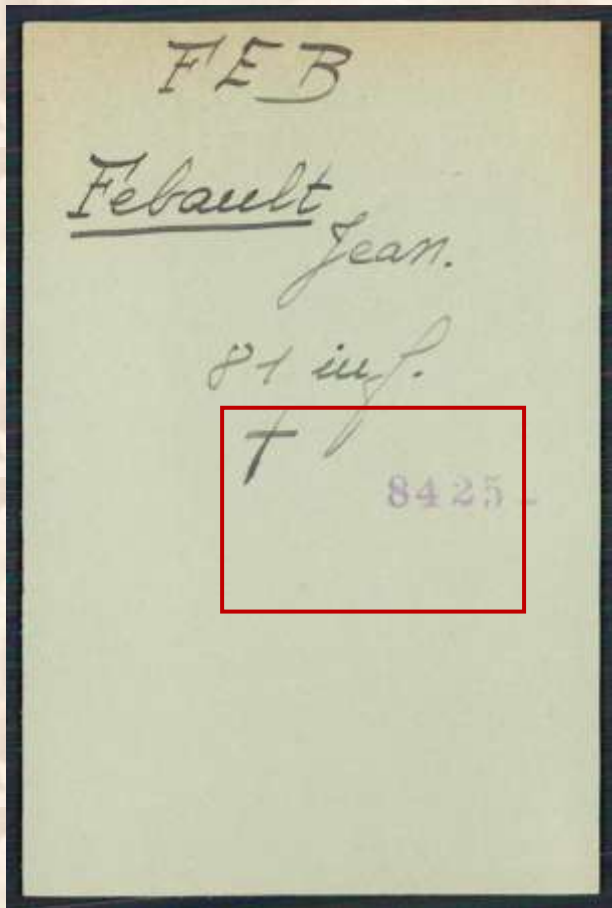
Two reference numbers to enter into the search engine are:

P 32 598
P 101 599



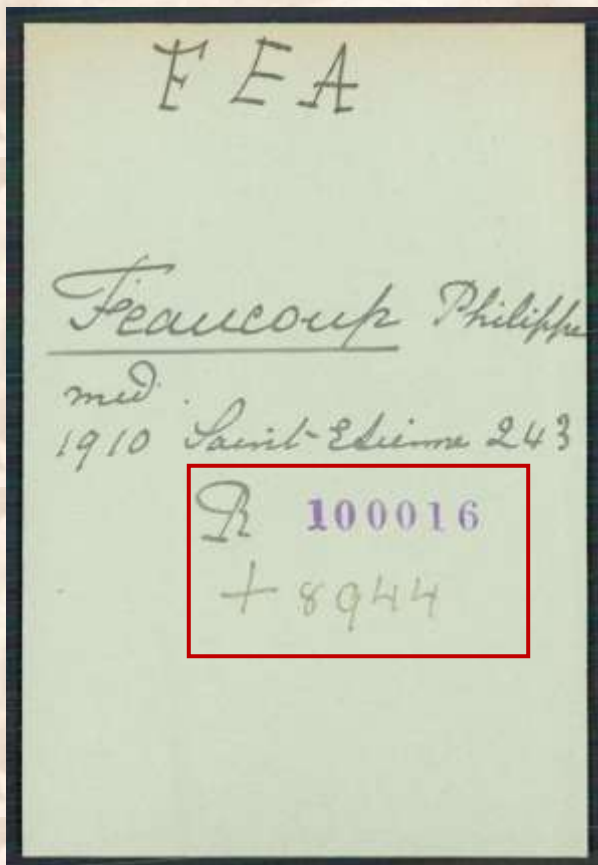
Two reference numbers to enter into the search engine are:

P 71 022
P 78 670



The reference number to enter into the search engine is:

† 8425



Two reference numbers to enter into the search engine are:

R 100 016

† 8944

FEB
Febre Jean
1 bel. 86^u
Mat. 9817
R4324

The reference number to enter into the search engine is:

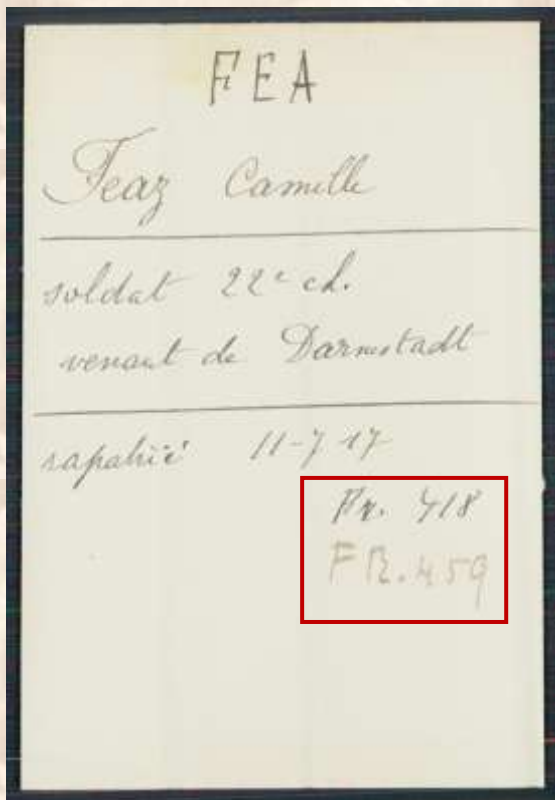
R 4324

COTE
Couvremer - Jules
Médaille 1918 -
S^t d^o 677 - R.6.101

The reference number to enter into the search engine is:

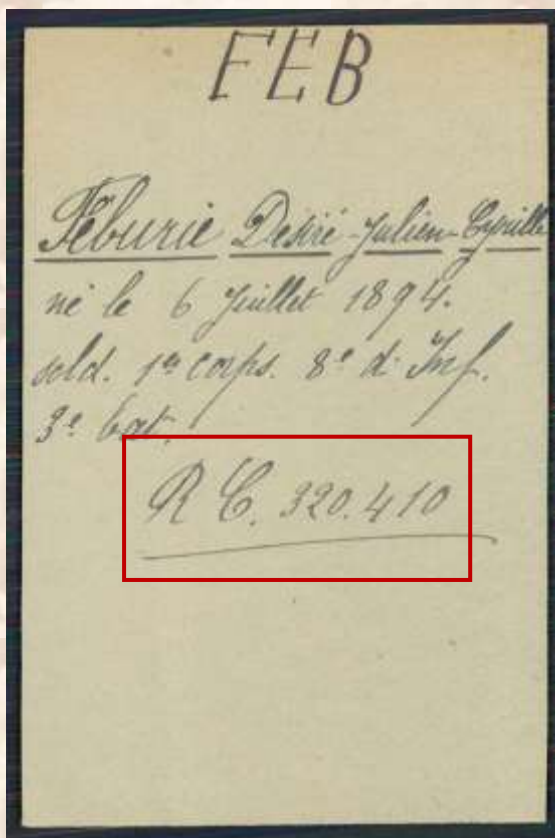
R 6101

(Do not read Rb 101 !)



Two reference numbers to enter into the search engine are:

FR 418
FR 459



This reference which begins with RC, does not correspond to any preserved document.
Hence it is not available as an option in the scroll down list of the search engine.

Sometimes another name, which is unrelated to the name on the front, can be found on the back side of the card, due to the fact that some cards were reused in order to inscribe a new name on the blank side of an existing card.

2/ Cards based on enquiries from the families of missing French and Belgian soldiers

They are generally on white paper

These cards were drawn up in Geneva on the basis of letters from the soldiers' families requesting information. For every enquiry, the International Prisoners-of-war Agency created a card, in order to respond as soon as the concerned soldier appeared on the prisoners list.

In certain cases these cards were in reality pre-printed forms sent to the Agency by the French and Belgian **research** organizations.

Very often, the soldier being sought had in fact died in combat and thus did not appear in any list of prisoners.

Example:

1

2

3

4

1 Soldier's surname and first name

2 Rank (corporal), service number, regiment (338e Infantry regiment, 6th battalion, 23rd company)

3 Address of the inquiring family

4 Most likely the reference number of the inquiry letter. Due to the fact that the inquiry letters were not preserved, you cannot research this reference in the search engine.
Your search ends here

10

In certain cases the incoming inquiries, were not sent directly by the families, but rather passed through intermediary research organisations external to the ICRC (for example The French Red Cross), which sent a pre-printed form to Geneva.

1 Surname

2 Rank, regiment

3 Two reference numbers are to enter into the search engine:
P 4653
P 11 124 ou 11 154 ?

3

Abbreviations used in the cards:

Abbreviation	Explanation	French translation	English translation
Erk. M	Erkennungsmarke	Plaque d'identification	
...			