



Ronald Raboye
Private First Class
U.S. Army

Personal Information: Private First Class (PFC) Ronald Raboye, service number RA-13331568, was assigned to K Company, 3rd Battalion of 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was reported as a prisoner of war (POW) on 11 July 1950 and a date of death of 1 January 1951. His name appears on both the “Johnnie Johnson List” and the “Missing in Action, Captivity” report compiled from returning prisoners of war.¹ His Field Search Case (FSC) number is 0006F.

General Military Situation and Circumstances of Loss: By mid-July 1950, the war in Korea was less than three weeks old, and was going very badly for the Republic of Korea (ROK) and American forces. The North Korean People’s Army (KPA) had been able to sustain its battlefield successes since the 25 June surprise invasion of South Korea. Given its superiority in men, artillery, and armor, the KPA overwhelmed every defensive position that the allies had hastily erected. The allies, lacking heavy artillery and anti-armor weaponry, had little chance of stopping the advancing KPA armored columns. Instead, the ROK and American soldiers did what they could to slow the KPA advance, to buy the time needed for the allied ships to bring U.S and U.N. reinforcements from around the world.

Each of the American formations in the field had to hold great widths of the ever-changing “defensive line.” From 5 to 13 July 1950, PFC Raboye’s 21st Infantry Regiment fought a series of battles as it fell back from Pyongt’aek to Choch’iwon. There was especially heavy fighting around Choch’iwon on the morning of 11 July 1950. PFC Raboye and his companions in the 3rd Battalion held entrenched positions they had just won back from the KPA the evening before. At 0630 on the morning of 11 July, they heard KPA tanks and troops advancing on their lines, but could not see the enemy due to heavy ground fog. Moments later, an accurate KPA mortar barrage hit the American defenders. Within minutes, the barrage destroyed the 3rd Battalion command post and its communications equipment. Just before 0700, four enemy tanks broke through the defensive line into the center of the position. Over one thousand KPA troops, with additional tanks, soon flanked the besieged units. American forces could no longer call in even the limited artillery support that they had, so fell back as well as they could, breaking into small parties to pass through the now-concentrating North Korean lines. PFC Raboye was captured during the course of this moving battle.

At the start of the day, the 3rd Battalion had 667 men deployed along its perimeter; but by the end of the day, only 150 men had made it back to the safety of friendly lines. Another 172 survivors regained friendly lines over the next four days. Overall, the battalion lost more than 60 percent of its men in the 11 July battle at Choch’iwon.

¹ The “**Johnnie Johnson List**” was compiled by Army SGT Wayne A. “Johnnie” Johnson, who was captured in July 1950 and repatriated in August 1953. His list had nearly 500 names, of the so-called “Tiger Group” (mostly from 24th Infantry Division) who were captured early in the war. The men on this list died at or en route to North Korean POW camps. The “**Missing in Action, Captivity**” report was created from the debriefings of almost every POW who returned to military control during Operation Little Switch (some gaps) and Operation Big Switch (pretty complete). They were asked to review MIA rosters and to point out everyone whom they remembered as POWs, or whose loss they recalled just prior to capture.

As a POW, PFC Raboye made his way north by stages to Seoul and Pyongyang, and was then taken by train to Manpo on south bank of the Yalu River in a group of 750 POWs and civilian internees. By now, many members of this group were beginning to succumb to the effects of prior wounds, dysentery, and pneumonia. The POWs were marched to villages near Kosan, then back to Manpo, in preparation for a much longer trek to the so-called Apex Camps further up the south bank of the Yalu River. PFC Raboye pressed on. Their group reached the first of the Apex Camps, at Chunggang-jin, around 10 November. They got what rest they could before moving on to the second, Hanjang-ni, before month's end, where they wintered-over. PFC Raboye was mortally ill, and died of exhaustion and malnutrition (he also likely had pneumonia) on or about New Year's Day at Hanjang-ni. Companions buried him and many others, as well as they could, on a hillside just above the village. We have not yet been allowed to work in this region, but have identified the villages associated with the Apex Camps to North Korean authorities as an area of special interest. Efforts at resolution, including preparations for future work in North Korea, continue.

Continuing efforts to resolve Korean War loss cases: In an effort to achieve the fullest possible accounting of missing U.S. servicemen, the predecessors of the Defense Prisoner of War (POW) / Missing in Action (MIA) Accounting Agency² (DPAA³) negotiated with North Korea from 1996 to 2004 and in 2011 for access to crash sites, battlefields, and prison camp cemeteries.

Excavations by DPAA of North Korea battlefields between 1996 and 2005 resulted in the recovery and repatriation of remains of over 220 U.S. servicemen. The North Koreans have also conducted unilateral recovery operations in various areas around North Korea, including the area just above the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and some air loss sites in 1954 and between 1990 and 1994 and in 2007. They returned over 2,900 boxes of remains in 1954 and over 200 additional caskets of remains starting in the early 1990s. We have no indication, however, that they exhumed his loss site.

In 2004 and 2005, our North Korean recovery operations took place in Unsan County and the Chosin Reservoir area. We had planned to return to these areas in 2012 to reinitiate recovery efforts that were halted in 2005. During October 2011 negotiations, the North Koreans agreed to take several steps necessary to facilitate our access to these areas. Regrettably, they did not follow through on that agreement and these operations remain suspended until such time as their actions allow our recovery missions to proceed.

We have conducted operations in South Korea every year since the beginning of the last decade except 2004. Our teams are now operating within the country several months a year working directly on investigations with the host nation's Ministry of National Defense Agency for Killed in Action Recovery and Identification (MAKRI). Currently DPAA has recovered (or received from MAKRI) over 20 sets of remains. Some have been identified, and the others are now under

² On 30 January 2015, the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), and the Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL), combined to form the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). From this point on any of these legacy organizations will be referred to collectively as DPAA.

³ DPAA's website (<http://www.dpaa.mil/>).

analysis at the Laboratory. Recent work in South Korea was completed Seoul, Wonju, Chorwon, Inje, the Pusan Perimeter, and near the DMZ. This has been followed by searches at air loss sites and along POW march routes.

In archival research initiatives, the North Koreans authorized limited access to their main military museum and national library in Pyongyang for POW/MIA-related research. The North Koreans provided our researchers with a selection of documents and artifacts from these archives for review during visits from 1997 to 1999. No information on his was found during these visits. We also checked Chinese sources, including their main Korean War museum in Dandong and their National History, Military and Aviation Museums along with their Army Publishing House in Beijing. Unfortunately, we found no information on PFC Raboye there.

The Chinese stated their intent to conduct searches for information in their archives on U.S. missing men from Korea, as they reorganize and relocate their war records to Beijing from the military regions. In accordance with arrangements signed with DPAA in 2008, 2012 and 2015, the Chinese have reported information on our unaccounted for service members from the Korean War – thus far only air losses. We hope future information releases from this multi-year effort will shed more light on our ground losses as well.

We also actively seek information from U.S. sources about PFC Raboye's loss, including research in the National Archives and regular dialogue with Korean War veterans associations, in the hope of developing new leads. While these men could provide no new information about the loss of PFC Raboye, we will forward any new discoveries to family members through the U.S. Army Casualty Office⁴ (1-800-892-2490).

⁴ The Past Conflict Repatriations Branch is an organization under the Army Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Division (CMAOD) at the Army Human Resources Command (HRC) in Fort Knox, Kentucky ([https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Past Conflict Repatriations Branch PCRB Mission Statement](https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Past%20Conflict%20Repatriations%20Branch%20PCRB%20Mission%20Statement)).

