

SPECIAL TO AIRBORNE PRESS

**GABRIEL LOPES



Gabe entered the Army on December 19, 1944. He had completed his high school studies at Rio Vista High but because he was so anxious to get into the war, he would not wait for graduation. (His mother actually "walked" for him, receiving his diploma).

In the military, Gabe became an *infantryman* with a specialty as a "sniper." Once overseas in the Philippines, he was engaged in some of the heaviest fighting of the Pacific campaign. For days, he would be stationed in the jungle alone, engaging the enemy. His unit, the *323d Infantry Regiment* sustained some of the heaviest casualties of the war.

Sergeant Lopes's duties had him strafing fire constantly upon designated enemy targets. He would have to move from location to location to avoid detection from the enemy. During this period, it is considered that Sergeant Lopes ability to disrupt Japanese operations resulted in the saving of scores of native and American lives. For days, not even his Unit knew where Sergeant Lopes was located.

As recognition for his outstanding leadership, Sergeant E5 Lopes was promoted to Staff Sergeant and given charge of the *29th Regimental Command Team*. Staff Sergeant Lopes and his *Regimental Command Team* were instrumental in aiding the rescue of the entire village of Ominota and three American soldiers that had been held captive for over three years. For the remainder of the war, SSG Lopes and his command team fought against pockets of Japanese resistance on the Island. For these heroic efforts, SSG Lopes is awarded the combat infantry's highest award.

*Taken from the official form AGO, 16-45815-1,
found in Gabe's Infantry Journal.*

**Gabe Lopes was a mild mannered father, butcher, supporter of all good causes in the little town of Rio Vista, California. Little did the folks living there know the hero who lived among them. This fact was only discovered in his personal papers after his death. There were numerous awards and descriptions of his heroism that no one ever knew. [Back to Airborne Press---](#)>