

Guy Gabaldon (1926-2006), served in the United States Marine Corps during World War II (1939-1945). During the Battle of Saipan in 1944, Gabaldon—who spoke Japanese—persuaded numerous Japanese soldiers and civilians to surrender. For his actions, he became known as the "Pied Piper of Saipan." Saipan is the largest of the Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Guy Louis Gabaldon was born on March 22, 1926, in Los Angeles. His parents were a poor Mexican American couple. At age 12, he moved in with Japanese American friends of the family. Gabaldon's adopted family taught him the Japanese language, customs, and culture. On Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, brought the United States into World War II. The U.S. government moved Gabaldon's adopted family to a camp for Japanese Americans in Wyoming.

In 1943, Gabaldon joined the U.S. Marine Corps. As a private in the Second Marine Division, he took part in the 1944 invasion of Saipan. Amid brutal fighting on the island, Japanese soldiers staged suicide charges against the Americans. Many Japanese civilians jumped from cliffs to avoid capture. Gabaldon, sneaking into enemy lines at night, persuaded more than 1,000 people to save their lives and surrender. Still, about 50,000 Japanese soldiers and civilians died during the fighting on Saipan, along with more than 3,000 Americans.

For Gabaldon's efforts, the Marines gave him the Navy Cross, the Marines' second highest award for valor. His story became widely known through the television program "This Is Your Life" (1952-1961) and the motion picture *Hell to Eternity* (1960). Gabaldon later lived on Saipan for about 20 years. He wrote about his war experiences in *Saipan: Suicide Island* (1990). Gabaldon died on Aug. 31, 2006.

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