

GABBY
*G***GABBY**
*EVERY***GOES**
EVERYWHERE

(A collection of anecdotes, military and police jokes
and what have you)

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*THIS BOOK IS
PRESENTED AS A
GIFT TO:*

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FROM:

Date: _____

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FORE . . .

This book is a collection of PERSONAL anecdotes, jokes and other stories collated by the author, as told and retold by people loitering aimlessly at military camps, at the Multi-Purpose Center in Camp Crame and police stations and offices nationwide.

I INTENTIONALLY MADE SOME CHANGES IN THE SETTINGS IN SOME ENTRIES TO PROTECT THE SANITY and reputation OF THOSE allegedly INVOLVED.

ANY SIMILARITY WITH NAMES OF PEOPLE, PLACES, EVENTS, TIME AND MANNER MAY NOT BE COINCIDENTAL. YOU MAY BE THE ONE BEING ALLUDED TO, BUT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TAKE THIS BOOK too SERIOUSLY. JUST GIVE A GOOD LAUGH, laugh at yourself, laugh at them, AND then WE ARE EVEN.

The worst joke here is that you are reading it, and despite all the preventive efforts and serious warning of the Surgeon General to stop you, you just keep on. What else can an author ask for ?

As the corrupted saying goes: *"It is better to have laughed once and lost, than never to have laughed at all."* Good old Santa Claus is laughing all the way.

You hear "fore" when a golf ball is about to land your way. It's nice to know in advance what's gonna hit you.

FORE ... !!!

LLG

THANKS PAGE

"*Thank you*" for all the corny and friendly people out there who supplied me with the jokes and stories, who asked that they remain anonymous, for fear of compromising their prestige, status, fame and fortune. Most of them are the happy soldiers and policemen who know how to laugh at themselves AND SEE LIFE AS IT IS. Ninety nine percent of them are intelligent. The remaining one percent are even more intelligent.

"*Thank you*" for the living jokes here and there who make the world a little bit funnier AND A LITTLE BIT MORE BEARABLE. They provide the ecological balance. Let us love them because they are the rare and the endangered species. They should stay in this world a little more. Let us laugh to survive.

From "a poor widow's son" ...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

WARNING !

THE
UNAUTHORIZED
DISCLOSURE OF THE
CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK TO
PEOPLE WITH LOW I.Q. MAY
POSE A SERIOUS THREAT
TO NATIONAL
SECURITY.

UNAUTHORIZED
READING OF THIS BOOK
DURING OFFICE OR CLASS HOURS
IS A SERIOUS BREACH OF DECORUM AND
IS AN UNFORGIVABLE, HEINOUS VIOLATION
OF OFFICE OR SCHOOL REGULATIONS.

[The penalty is lethal rejection (*meaning: Kadiri to death*)]

... on the second thought, spreading the thoughts of this book may be healthy for people who want to make it TO THE TOP; for those who are now making it TO THE TOP, and for those who will never make it TO THE TOP, AND WHO WILL "sour

grape"

THAT IT'S NOT THE TOP THAT

COUNTS,

BUT RATHER,

THE first THOUGHT,

and then, perhaps, the second thought.

PART I. LITTLE GABBY



In the beginning ...

Gabby was born in small hut in Sto. Tomas, Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija. The place was a small *ikmo* (betel leaf) producing barrio, full a large acacia trees and adjacent to Penaranda River that at that time teemed with edible shells (*tulya*) and fishes like *susuwi*, *biya* and *lukaok*. Along the banks were *sineguelas* trees. Children played with *saga-saga*, *acacia* and *balubad* (cashew) seeds. You would see children pulling toy cars made out of disposed sardine and milk cans.

The acacia trees have long been gone, sold to some wood carvers. The road leading to that barrio is now cemented. The river bank has pitifully become a garbage dump site. The shells and the fishes are gone. Only the memories remain.

The prophecy:

His grandmother, whom he called Inang Jandra, (nee Alejandra Ventura), who was so proud and so happy for her cute chinky eyed little grandson, in a prophetic gesture, said that Gabby, when he grows up, would be handling pencils and papers. ("*Ang hahawakan ng apo ko, paglaki niya ay lapis at papel.*") That was year 1954. He was nicknamed Bondying, but this was later changed to Lò. Gabby's grandmother did not foresee the ball pens, fountain pens, technical pens, and the desktop and laptop computers.

The Wanderer

Gabby's father drove a passenger jeepney for a living, and later sold books in the provincial elementary schools. Gabby as a pre-schooler, used to travel with his father, who as a book salesman, traveled in the Northern, Central and Southern Luzon. Gabby's father wanted his son to see many places and learn. He saw 14 provinces. Gabby thus got an early exposure to travel and books.

It was during these travels that Gabby learned about Jose Rizal, Apolinario Mabini, Emilio Aguinaldo, the ethnic groups in Luzon, the American bases and a lot of other things. He had his first airplane flight as a passenger when he was six. A passenger priest seated beside him gave him a piece of bread.

A Dreamer

Gabby's earliest dream when he was a child, was that he was inside a simple poor man's house, made of wood sidings with galvanized iron roof. Around the house, a cute little toy airplane was circling the house. Gabby stretched his arms and caught the toy airplane as he was standing by the door. Whatever that dream meant, Gabby does not know.

Toys

For toys, he had a wooden rocking horse, a cheap wooden toy car, and improvised cars made of milk and sardine tin cans, and later, a tricycle. He

had his first bicycle when he was 11. Just like any other child in the neighborhood, he played with rubber bands in a game called *ihip*, caught spiders and went spider fighting. He played child games such as *harangang-taga or patintero, otso-otso, taguan or kurikit, luksong tinik, luksong kalabaw* and *baril-barilan*.

Gabby liked mechanical or friction toy cars, but seldom had the privilege to buy one. One time, his mother bought him one, but instead of playing with it, Gabby curiously disassembled to find out how it worked. In his older years, he had an obsession for beautiful cars, perhaps due to that “deprivation of toy cars” in his childhood.

Voracious reader

Gabby learned to read at 5 through the patient coaching of his father. Soon, he read so much komiks that neighbors get amused on how he could tell stories in *Liwayway, Bulaklak, Tagalog Classics, Pinoy, Kenkoy* and other publications in the late 50's.

He later got a reading ban from his father, because he was such a voracious reader, and his father was worried he might ruin his eyes.

Questions

In 1961, Gabby in Grade One, curiously asked his astonished teacher why Jose Rizal and

Francisco Mercado, the hero's father, had different surnames.

Stories to tell

Gabby loved telling stories, from fables, legends to biographies to his classmates. He and his classmates would sit on the grass on the school grounds before going home, and tell stories.

Artist

While in Grade One, Gabby was the class illustrator or artist. He used to draw the teaching devices and the pictures being placed on the bulletin board. Teachers in the school were amused watching Gabby draw pictures effortlessly.

Hard Earned Money

Gabby's first income was in 1962. It was a five peso bill given by a happy customer who asked Gabby to draw some pictures for him.

[Subsequent income came from selling Christmas cards, dressmaker's catalogs, butong-pakwan in a local theater. In 1971, he received his first allowance from the AFP. It was twenty pesos which he sent to his mother.]

Gabby sold *butong-pakwan* (watermelon seeds) inside a local theater in Gapan. He would walk inside the theater announcing "Ere-

butompakwan ... de-bote-malamig ... popsicle ... butompakwan ... " at the aisles and so on and so forth in a sing-song cadence. Soon, a friend always went with him and offered to sell Gabby's *butong pakwan* and not even mind the commission. (You get 20% commission from the sales).

Gabby realized that different people are motivated differently. He wanted to earn his week's *baon* (allowance) while his friend just wanted to see the movies for free, in the guise of being a vendor.



Gabby in Grade 2.

Manna for Birthday

Gabby always had *handa* (food for guests) during his birthdays. January 7 (his birthday) is the day after the January 6 feast of the Three Kings in Gapan. He would ask for unserved food from his Tia Juana. There was always enough food for the day.

Early Discipline

His father was a humorist. He would sometimes do some "magic tricks" for fun, but he was a disciplinarian. He had a *patpat*, a durable bamboo stick for spanking. (*Gabby's children now refer to it as **baston ng disiplina.***)

Watching TV in the neighbor's house was a big no-no.

Equally strict was his *Inkong* (grandfather), but whom Gabby always visited. His *Inkong* had guava trees in the yard, and a horse for his calesa. Gabby used to climb the guava trees.

His Inkong was teaching him to make the sign of the cross, saying "*Ang tanda ng Sta. Cruz ... sa ngalan ng Ama, ng Diyos Anak at Ispirito Santo.*" Gabby wanted to say, "Matanda na lang." Gabby got a spanking.

Life in the Farm

Gabby spent some weeks in his Inkong's rice farm where he learned how to catch edible frogs with *bingwit* (*a thin bamboo pole with a string at one end. The string had bait to catch the frog*). At nights, he would go with an uncle to use the *pasilaw* or lamp to catch frogs. He would run errands like bringing lunch to his grandfather who was plowing the field. Come harvest time, little

Gabby would pick palay stalks left behind by the reapers.

His grandfather planted corn at the backyard of his house. At times, he would pick corn ears and cook them over charcoal.

The house on the farm had "*batalan*" or a back porch with bamboo flooring. This *batalan* was used primarily for washing dishes, or taking baths. Adjacent to this *batalan* was the dirty kitchen.

The dining table was called "*dulang.*" It was a low table that you would not even need a chair; all your have to do was to sit on the floor.

He watched how his grandfather would roll tobacco to make a stick of cigarette. Or how he would thresh rice stalks with his feet, and how his aunts would winnow the palay grains, to separate the chaff.

During those times, the creeks and rivers and the irrigation canals where your could bathe, swim and catch fish, were clear and unpolluted.

Thus Gabby spent some early years of his life in the farm.

Gabby's family moved the house to its present site in Sto. Nino. Gabby saw how the *bayanihan* spirit worked when able-bodied

neighbors helped in loading their small house onto a “six by six” truck.

PART II. TEEN-AGER GABBY



Those were the days . . .

Can you imagine Gabby winning in dance contests ? That was when the dance crazes were Shing-a-ling, Boogaloo, and the Horse, and the

popular movie stars were Helen Gamboa, Jun Aristorenas, Jess Lapid, Billy Castelvi, Tony Ferrer, Susan Roces, Amalia Fuentes, Alona Alegre, Jean Lopez. There was even one Zaldy Zshornack.

Sometimes, the winner danced on borrowed shoes, because he could not afford to buy a new pair. That taught him to *put his feet in another's shoes*.

Calesa Driver

Gabby at times would pitch in as calesa driver for his *Ingkong*. During Saturdays, he would haul watermelons from the barrio across the river, to the market, and earn two pesos.

The horse never talked, so he never heard anything straight from the horse's mouth.

GABBY GOES TO THE STAGE

Gabby had two unforgettable stage blunders.

In 1965 he forgot a line of a poem during a contest, but after recalling the forgotten line, and regaining his composure, recited the poem in full. (*Too late, he had been deducted points for poor memorization.*)

In 1967, Gabby, being one of Gaudencio Antonino scholars, was tasked to render a song in a

convocation to highlight the acceptance of the scholarships.

Gabby went to the stage, a little bit nervous. The moment of truth came: his voice squeaked while trying to reach the high notes of the song "**The Impossible Dream.**" At first, the audience laughed, but later applauded, either out of pity or sheer admiration for his face and guts !

Gabby made sure he would never make the same blunders again for the rest of his life. He always prepared entertaining speeches, and practiced singing by joining a combo, as he was obsessed with becoming a singer someday. He dreamed of singing the same song perfectly to the class in the future.

GABBY GOES TO HIGH SCHOOL

Gabby topped the high school entrance examination in 1967, with a wide margin over the second placer.

He always aimed at perfecting examinations.

"*Ano ka ba naman? Highest ka na sa exam, nagrereklamo ka pa ?*" said Gabby's classmate in high school after the test papers in Biology had been given back to the students.

"No, I'm not complaining. I just want to set the record straight that my answer was correct, and that I should get the extra point for it."

The question was, "*Who is the father of Modern Heredity,*" and the answer is "*Mendel.*"

"That's precisely why I am complaining. The one who checked the papers crossed my answer *Johann Gregor Mendel*, and that is the full name of Mendel."

The teacher corrected Gabby's answer, and got the extra point.

GABBY GOES TO AMBO

With high school graduation nearing, Gabby could not decide what course to take, in what school to enrol.

He also realized that his family is so poor, and he has seven brothers and sisters, that his father would surely find it difficult to send him to college. At that time, his mother was sickly.

He went to see Ambo, a classmate who has an older brother who is a senior cadet in PMA. Ambo advised him to try PMA. He landed in the top 20 passers nationwide.

GABBY GOES TO PMA

Believe it or not. Gabby, the class valedictorian, who could not even play good basketball in high school, was going to be a PMA cadet to receive free sessions on posture correction (*brace up*); memory improvement (*What's my middle name ? What's the name of my dog ?*); muscular toning (*100 push ups*); stamina enhancement (*5 kilometers to go*); vocal training (*Sir, the Days !*); three *square meals* a day, lots of dress rehearsals (*i.e. dressing formation*); time management (*Report to the uppie after class*); and stress training (*tantalizing cinnamon rolls*).

What kept Gabby staying in PMA, despite the rigors of the so-called Beast Barracks, was pride. He could not and would not want to go home resigned or separated from the Academy because his father had prepared a small *lechon* for his send-off.

And he had no choice of schools to enroll in. His father could not afford to send him to college. He missed the entrance examinations in the colleges in Manila, and the only option left to get a free college education was through the Academy.

During the physical examination in AFP Medical Center in V Luna, Quezon City, in 1971, Gabby realized that he had no more money. He borrowed a typewriter from an uncle, got some sheets of coupon bond, and wrote a short story, entitled "Nancy" under the pen name *Justiniano Lucas*. He brought the manuscripts to the editor of Tagumpay Magazine, who readily liked the story

and paid him ten pesos. There was a writer in the making.

At that time, ten pesos was a lot of money for a high school student like Gabby.

GABBY GOES TO CONGRESS

In 1971, one of the formal requirements for entry into the PMA was a congressional nomination.

After passing the written, physical and medical examinations, Gabby went to Congress (*now the site of the National Museum*) to ask for a nomination letter from his congressman.

The lady receptionist in the office of the congressman told Gabby to get first an endorsement letter from his mayor. This meant Gabby had to go back to Gapan, Nueva Ecija, and this would take time, and besides, he had little money left in his pocket.

Feeling sad over this turn of events, Gabby loitered in the halls of Congress, figuring out what to do next, then went upstairs, where he saw the office of then Senator Genaro Magsaysay. The outside walls of his office were made of glass that you could easily see the people working and transacting inside. Gabby went in.

The lady receptionist saw him, and with a smile, approached this 17 year old *provinciano* high school student, and asked what the office could do for him.

Gabby, surprised at this kind of attention he never expected, told her that he needed a congressional nomination to PMA. The lady receptionist told Gabby to sit down, took down his name, and after about five minutes, handed Gabby an envelope containing a senatorial nomination letter, signed by the senator himself ! [*This was Gabby's first taste of getting public service from a public servant without the need for a letter endorsement.*]

[**Note:** When Gabby entered the Academy, he wrote the good senator a Thank-You letter. Senator Magsaysay replied, "*Thank you for your letter and the kind thoughts expressed therein. Do well in your studies ... I have great hopes in you.*"]

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Plebehood taught Gabby so many lessons in life, one of which is not to blame anybody else for one's own shortcomings. The responsibility or blame, if there was any, should be on the person told directly to account for the blunder. In short, somebody has "*to take full responsibility for what was, or was not done.*"

Gabby, then a PMA plebe, got a delinquency report for coming late to guard

mounting. His explanation: "Sir, I failed to wake up on time." He got just 5 demerits.

Other plebes who were also late explained, "Sir, the guard I was supposed to relieve did not wake me up." They got 20 demerits each.

Since then, Gabby had the habit of finding out where he himself made a mistake in case anything went wrong. The ritual here is following the common upperclass response to a plebe who had just committed a laxity: "*You why and why there until you reach the buttocks of ...* (ANY name of A SEXY actress)"

Field examples: Bakit nang bakit (why and why)

Bakit nabangga ang patrol jeep ? *Kasi mahina ang preno.*

Bakit mahina ang preno ? *Kasi hindi nalagyan ng brake fluid ang patrol jeep.*

Bakit hindi nalagyan ? *Kasi hindi na-check up.*

Bakit hindi na-check up ? *Kasi abala sa tong-its.*

Bakit ka bumagsak sa subject na 'yon ? *Kasi mahirap ang exam.*

Bakit mahirap ang exam ? *Kasi hindi ka naghanda.*

Bakit hindi ka naghanda ? *Kasi, nalulong sa tong-its.*

Bakit nalusob ng kalaban ang detachment ? *Kasi hindi mo alam ang galaw ng kalaban.*

Bakit hindi mo alam ang galaw ng kalaban ? *Kasi hindi ka nagpa-patrol.*

Bakit hindi ka nagpa-patrol ? *Kasi nalulong ka sa tong-its.*

Bakit ka nalulong sa tong-its. *Kasi gusto mong manalo ng pera.*

Bakit gusto mong manalo ng pera ? *Kasi, maliit ang suweldo mo.*

Bakit maliit ang suweldo mo. *Kasi mababa ang ranggo mo.*

Bakit mababa ang ranggo mo. *Kasi high school graduation ka lang.*

Bakit high school graduation ka lang? *Kasi hindi mo naisip na mag-college.*

Bakit hindi mo naisip na mag-college. *Kasi wala kang ginawa kundi manood ng sine.*

Bakit ka nanood ng sine ? *Kasi mahilig ka sa pelikulang may barilan.*

Bakit mahilig ka sa pelikulang may barilan ? *Kasi hilig mong maging pulis.*

Bakit gusto mong maging pulis ? *Para makapaglaro ng tong-its.*

Bakit gusto mong maglaro ng tong-its ? *Para manalo ng pera.*

Bakit gusto mong manalo ng pera ? *Para may pantaya uli sa tong-its.*



Gabby, fresh from plebehood, during the PMA Southern Cruise.

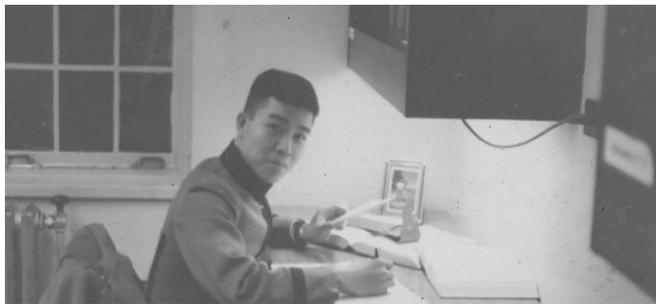
GABBY GOES TO AMERICA

Gabby landed in the top 15 of his class during the first semester of his plebe year. This

academic class standing opened up a rare opportunity for him to study in a US service academy of his choice. The US government offered slots in USMA (US Military Academy at West Point, New York; US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; US Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

He signified for West Point, and got it, after passing the required scholastic aptitude tests, and the physical and medical examinations held at Clark Air Base in 1972.

GABBY GOES TO WEST POINT



Plebe Gabby, during study period.

Gabby resigned in 1972 from the PMA after a year of plebehood so that he could accept the his appointment as the lone Philippine Government scholar to West Point for that year.

He went home to Gapan, Nueva Ecija, and told his father about his resignation. His father, deeply saddened by the news, said, "*Anak, tayo ay angkang mahirap lang. Ang kayamanan ay naitatago, ang karukhaan ay hindi. Hindi kita kayang pag-aralin sa Ateneo, sa UP o sa UST, kaya anak, dala ng ating kahirapan, sa Amerika ka na lang mag-aral !*"

Gabby went to the Big Apple at eighteen. His traveling bag was a small bag containing toothpaste, toothbrush, underwear, a jacket and a spare shirt, a face towel and Tancho pomade. He had one hundred and one dollars, to be exact, in his pocket.

The plane left Clark Air Base, had a stopover in Yokota, Japan, WHERE HE WAS MISTAKEN FOR A JAPANESE AT THE AIRPORT. He landed in Travis Air Force Base in California. A US Army sergeant helped him get a half fare plane ticket (for around \$80) for Washington DC, where he was to spend a day to see his relatives, before going to New York.

He had about twenty dollars left upon landing in Washington DC. An uncle in Washington DC whom he visited before going to New York, gave him a crisp twenty dollar bill. (*The peso-dollar exchange rate then was seven to one*).

Gabby liked his Tancho pomade so much that he brought it with him to America. His

American roommate, seeing him put the sticky greenish stuff on his hair, was shocked and jokingly called him **Greaseball**.

Gabby, now in the States, readily shifted to gel for his hair. Goodbye, Tancho !

- o - 0 - o -

An American classmate invited Gabby to his house, and said, "*Lou, just relax and feel at home.*"

Gabby saw a bowl full of biscuits and took one piece to eat. It was tough and tasted bitter. So as not to offend the host in throwing away the unconsumed piece of biscuit, Gabby ate it all.

His classmate saw his agony and said, "*Hey, Gabby . . . don't eat that. That's **dog biscuit**.*"

GABBY GOES TO A FOOTBALL GAME

The first American football game Gabby ever saw was an opener for the USMA Army football team versus the University of Nebraska football team in 1972.

During the game, Gabby could not figure out what was going on, so he kept on asking another cadet beside him why this player passed the ball, why another kicked it, and why another ran with it,

and why the added scores varied from 1 point to 2 points to 3 points and then 6 points. The other cadet, amusedly realizing that Gabby was a foreign cadet who had never seen football all his life, hastily explained the rules of the game.

Gabby won over his ignorance, but the West Point Army team lost miserably, 77-7.

GABBY GOES TO CHURCH

Gabby attended Sunday Mass formation for new cadets at West Point. Soon they marched off and proceeded to the amphitheater where a mass would be celebrated.

"*This American Mass is quite different from the Mass in the Philippines. The ceremony is different, the prayers are different,*" wondered Gabby who felt something was not exactly wrong, but which was not exactly right either.

It turned out Gabby joined the religious service for Protestants.

And the Cadet Officer of the Day taking the formation attendance reported one Catholic cadet missing.

GABBY GOES ATHLETIC

Gabby did not have athlete's foot.

As a plebe in PMA, Gabby had no competitive talent in the more popular sports. So, he joined the Alfa Company **Cross-Country** Team, then dubbed as the "*Strong Men's Club*."

Gabby joined track and field at West Point, in the 400-meter run. After one heat, he placed **fourth** in a pack of **four** runners. He was pitting three strides against two of the American athletes.



A nostalgic visit to PMA, Summer of 1975.

In his **swimming** class, Gabby was called "Rock" by his instructor. Rock was a term for swimming students who could not swim properly, and who would eventually sink. All the swimming he knew then, before conquering America, was "*langoy ilog*."

No, Gabby had so much pride. He asked for tutorial assistance from a classmate who

patiently coached him on scientific swimming, daily after classes and vacant periods. He made it, and soon joined the Advanced Swimming Course, otherwise known as Survival Swimming.

His motivation was so high because flunking swimming would mean a summer school, and consequently, West Point would not grant him a summer vacation to be spent in the Philippines. He would be forced to spend his vacation at the swimming pool for the Summer Swimming Remedial Classes.

Then, Gabby joined swimming intramurals. Right after the plunge, he would be ahead; exerting all the brute force he could muster; in going back, he would be at the middle of the pack; and at the last heat, he would still be in the water exerting the all the remaining brute force he had, while all the other swimmers had left the pool.



President Fidel V. Ramos, USMA '50 then the Chief Philippine Constabulary and his family, during his visit to West Point. Cadets in uniform (L-R): Eric Javier '77; Romy Posadas '75; Gabby '76 and Danny Lim '78.

Gabby joined the **soccer** team. He collided with an 180 pounder chunk of an animal who didn't even budge an inch. Gabby fell like a log on the grass, and felt his body if he had any broken bones, broken legs or broken arms.

When he stood up without any injury, shaken but unrattled, his American team mates cheered like they've never cheered before.

Gabby joined the intramural **wrestling** team. He, at 120 lbs, had his lightest opponent weighing 140 lbs. His objective, according to his American coach was NOT even to win the match, but just to last . . . **just to last for three fu ...@ # ! & * ... ing rounds.**

During a match up in plebe **boxing**, Gabby selected the smallest guy. He was Duane Castro, an American of Mexican descent. Gabby thought confidently that "*he could outbox this guy.*"

The first jab in the first round was not from Gabby. The powerful jab landed smack right into his nose that went bleeding despite the headgear. The boxing instructor had to stop the fight, although the bleeding was actually from an enlarged pimple on Gabby's nose.

Gabby learned later that Duane was a New York Golden Gloves boxing champion before he entered West Point. So physically tough was the guy that he even joined varsity 150-lb football team.

Gabby and Duane became good friends, they coming from the same cadet regiment.

In the following bouts, Gabby no longer chose his opponents. Actually, he had no choice. In the required four graded 3-rounder matches, Gabby won two, and lost two on points.

Well, not bad for a featherweight plebe from the Philippines.

Gabby's classmates, and life at Woopoo (West Point)

What ? Gabby no speak English ?

Gabby's, classmates used to tease Gabby about his English. Gabby did not have the American twang and the slang before coming to America, so his classmates would ask, "*Hey, Gabby, where did you learn to speak English ?*"

Gabby's proficiency in English, was of course in the grammatical English. After the first term paper in English, Gabby got a grade of "A." Surprised, his classmates, who only got B's and C's, asked, "*Hey Gabby, where did you learn to write English ?*"

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Gabby had a classmate who was so good in Philosophy, which he took as an elective subject. The final examination question was "**Why?**"

His classmate just wrote "**Why not ?**" Nothing more, nothing less. He submitted his paper while the rest of the section were expounding laboriously the answer to the question **Why**.

His classmate got an "A."

Tall and Short Stories



Gabby at Trophy Point. At the background is the Hudson River.

The Tall Story. Gabby was designated as Battalion S- 2/3 (Intel and Operations). The battalion S-1 (Personnel and Adjutant) was an almost seven-footer cadet towering like Marlou Aquino, and Gabby, to be standing next to him, was only 5'5". Gabby and this cadet had a deal: they

would take turns in attending the parade (one would attend the parade and the other would get excused). The short guy and the tall guy should not stand side by side in the parade.

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The Short Story. Gabby had a classmate, named Randy, who was about 5'2" tall. Randy joined the Dialectic Society and became engrossed in musical plays. In one of the plays, he got a lead role. He sang, "*For once in a lifetime, I feel like a GIANT.*"

Gabby teased, "A giant monkey?"

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There was a cadet who loved his Florsheim dress shoes so much. When others would send their shoes to the post cobbler for a "change of soles", he would send his shoes for a "change of uppers."

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To save on study time in their senior year, Gabby made a deal with his roommate, named Racq. Gabby would solve the math problems and show the solutions to Racq, while Racq would read the history assignment and discuss it with Gabby before taps.

They both passed the two subjects, and survived the year using this new kind of information technology, or ... rather, information exchange ?

Oriental Music

Gabby's mother mailed him two Philippine music albums, and his roommate eagerly and curiously waited to listen, anxiously expecting to hear the gongs, flutes, and some unusual strings typical of ethnic music from the Philippines.

So Gabby played the long playing records of Nora Aunor and Victor Wood.

The Balut Episode

Gabby brought to his roommate some *balut* he had bought from a Filipino store in New York City. Gabby explained that *balut* is made from duck eggs which are cooked before they hatch.

When Gabby started eating the chick, with its beak, feathers, feet, and what have you showing, his roommate almost puked.



Gabby spent some vacation with his relatives in Norfolk, Virginia, USA.

GABBY GOES TO AIRBORNE SCHOOL

In the US Army Airborne School, in Fort Benning, Georgia, USA, they teach you how to bail out of the plane, and with your head bowed and tucked to your chest, they tell you to count "*one thousand ... two thousand ... three thousand ... up*". The thousand count corresponds to seconds count with which jumpers have to wait before the chute opens, usually three seconds. The "*up*" is the cue for the jumper to look up to see if the canopy is open. If the canopy is not open, or just fluttering, then you are in deep trouble. (Or should I say "in high trouble"?)

Gabby's first jump in the summer of 1974 was a scream of one thou-a-aa-aaa-aaaa-aaaaaaaa !

In the subsequent jumps, Gabby managed to say the "up." Because he was much lighter than the other jumpers, he stayed up longer in the air.

That was a wonderful, peaceful feeling up there. Airborne !

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Airborne Instructor's advise if you jump out of the plane and your main chute and reserve chute do not open: While in the air, bend down, down ... down ... down some more ... then reach for your buttocks .. then KISS YOUR ASS GOOD-BYE.

If this doesn't work, take Option # 2:

Straighten your body, raise your left hand in the air and point it to the sky, and let your body pierce the ground, feet first, till you sink vertically up to the top of your head. The rescue party can easily find you because all they have to do is search for your raised hand.

Then, they will just pull you out of the ground, but if you're stuck real good underneath, at least you have saved your watch as a damned real good Airborne trooper.



Gabby's sketch of his American platoon leader and assistant platoon leader. This drawing was posted on the company bulletin board.

GABBY GOES TO THE WEST COAST

After graduation, Gabby drove with a classmate, James Henry Gordon, from Washington DC in the East Coast to Seattle, Washington in the

West Coast. The trip took seven days of driving and sightseeing. Gabby saw rural America, with its barns in the middle of wide farms and huge corn fields, after driving through very scenic highways.

From Seattle, Gabby took a plane to San Francisco, California, and a bus to Travis Air Force Base where he checked in for his return flight to the Philippines. But at the airport, he felt something wrong: he was having a fever, and feeling dizzy, so he asked for help from the Base personnel.

Gabby had to delay his flight. He got hospitalized for one week at the Base Hospital. He got chicken pox.

But it was home sweet home finally in July 1976.



Gabby's Home.

PART III. SOLDIER GABBY

