BALDOMERO LOPEZ

Baldomero Lopez is a name you may have never known or may have forgotten, but he was one of Tampa’s finest heroes. The example he set for others should be remembered by all of us.

Baldomero Lopez was born in Tampa on August 23, 1925. He was the son of Baldomero Juan Lopez, an immigrant from Spain, and Frances Reina Lopez of Tampa. He graduated from Hillsborough High School in 1943 where he distinguished himself by receiving the American Legion Award for Scholarship and Leadership and was the commander of the R.O.T.C. unit. He immediately joined the Navy and 11 months later was selected from the ranks to attend the U.S. Naval Academy. He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1948 in the upper third of his class and was commissioned a lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Lt. Lopez served in China and at various stations in the U.S. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, he was a leader of a platoon of Marines. On September 15, 1950, in the evening while leading his men in the assault landing in Inchon, Korea, he gave his life.
For this he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. So far as is known, he is the only Tampan who ever received the Congressional Medal of Honor. His heroism in throwing himself upon a grenade about to explode in order to shield his troops from injury so that they could accomplish their assigned mission was an act of extreme courage and self-sacrifice.

On Veterans Day, November 11, 1981, the Tampa Historical Society unveiled a plaque telling the story of Baldomero Lopez. This plaque is located on the property of the Tampa Federal Savings and Loan Association on the corner of Florida and Madison. The funds for the erection of the monument were provided by the officers of Tampa Federal.