

Earthquakes & Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima Belt Gradings!

By Master Leigh Jenkins



Enough has been written about all of the devastating earthquakes that have taken our once beautiful city of Christchurch by surprise.

And everyone has witnessed the incredible effects it has had on our city's infrastructure, business, and families and on all of our friends as well.

These really terrible earthquakes, tremors, and nasty conditions have destroyed the buildings that used to house some truly fine martial art clubs in the city, including our wonderful martial arts school.

My occupation as a Detective in the Police Force of New Zealand has placed me in the privileged position of being a front line responder at the damaged sites in the city, immediately after each of the earthquakes.

So my hobby as a martial arts instructor has allowed me to truly observe and understand the true resilient human condition and attitude in mid crisis.

When the quake hit, I watched as the students of our club made enquiries into the welfare of all their loved ones and friends, then assessed the damage done to their homes, and then sought to discover if they still had a job or not.



After the initial shock of everything, the student's concentration then turned to getting our martial arts school club back on its feet. Despite the circumstances, all of them expressed a really strong desire and need to return to some sense of normality in their life, something with a familiar routine again.



There was overwhelming support to get classes back up and running again at our school, and this was only just some three weeks after February's disaster quakes, then we opened our doors once more for the students to come and train.

When practicing the Eskrima, there is not much opportunity to allow your locked in concentration to stray, and so the regular practice at our school proved to be a welcome time out from the quakes.

And then my Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima Instructor, Grandmaster Vincent Palumbo of Adelaide in South Australia, was in constant contact with me, because he was so very concerned for the wellbeing of our Eskrima students at my school.

All of the students were practicing really well, and so I then decided to invite GMV to attend our club so as to conduct a seminar and grading for my enthusiastic Eskrima students.

I knew that GMV had the ability to dramatically raise the spirits, confidence, and energy levels of all these eskrima students who train at my martial arts club, because he is a realist, and he's so approachable to anyone.



Even though Christchurch was still being hammered by many of the aftershocks, and a real lot of the really negative publicity in the news, so all this combined with GMV's friends in Australia calling him nuts, as all of them tried their best to talk him out of going to Christchurch, he still agreed to come and do a seminar and grading here for our students.



Then I was truly humbled to watch the effort put in by the students during the build-up to the Grandmaster's visit, even despite some of the extremely personal circumstances that the students found themselves in.

So then it was on that Friday 11th of November 2011, Grandmaster Vince Palumbo came and conducted a 4 hour seminar. He first started with some of the more familiar basic drills, and he built them up into the comprehensive and effective drills with disarms, locks, throws and sparring routines.

As I first predicted, and as always, I just watched with a big smile on my face as the my student's spirits, confidence, energy levels, and skills excelled in the presence of GMV.

Then on Saturday 12th of November 2011, we practiced and graded for 8 hours, so it was a very busy day, and all students were successful in achieving their promotion.



At the commencement of the seminar weekend, there was Dr Kyle McWilliams who's also the only student to have been graded for black belt in New Zealand, but by the end of that weekend, it was Miss Nadine Maynard's turn to under go a gruelling examination for black belt in Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima.

She has definitely earned this rite because over the years she's consistantly been one of New Zealand Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima Club's outstanding performers, and so then she became the other only student to grade and achieve the prestigious rank of Eskrima Black Belt - so it was well earned by her, and it was truly deserved too.



Students graded to 1st Class Brown Belt:

- Patrick Flaherty
- Daniel Bowden

Students graded to 2nd Class Brown Belt:

- Tic H'sia How
- Nick Tan
- Rao Fu
- Daniel Mowatt-Gardiner
- Timothy Clark
- Patrick Durney

Students graded to 3rd Class Brown Belt:

- Robyn Tan
- Calvin Hock
- Jasmine Ting
- Ryo Yamamura
- Tom Aspinwall
- Andrew Schriffner
- Astrid Mueller
- Elliot Hill



All members of New Zealand Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima Club wish to thank Grandmaster Vincent Palumbo for his time and efforts spent with us here in Christchurch, and an even bigger thankyou to his lovely wife and daughter for just agreeing to let him come across to our shaky city.

Salamat to you GMV.

By Master Leigh Jenkins of the New Zealand Cacoy Doce Pares Eskrima Club.