

# Filipino Martial Arts

Digest

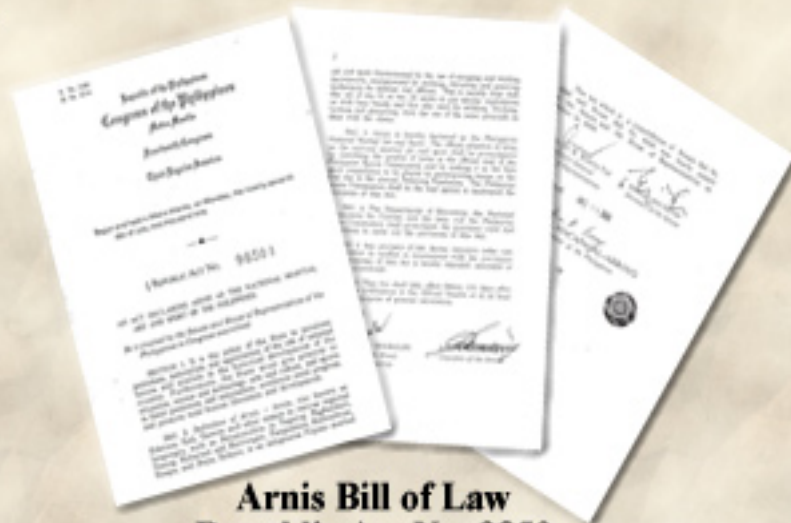
Dedicated to the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

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## 5 Things to Consider Before Buying a Self Defence Knife

### Offensive Use for Defanging the Snake

### The Main Role of Senior Students



Arnis Bill of Law  
Republic Act No. 9850  
December 11, 2009

Grandmaster Christopher 'Topher' Ricketts



## **FMA Digest**

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Building Blocks of FMA

MyFMA.net

FMA Pulse

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The FMA Digest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

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## **Publishers Desk**

### **Kumusta**

Well better late than never. The FMA Digest almost closed down due to no material, however thanks to following writers (David Foggie, James Hogue, Joel Huncar, Phillip Weathers, Frank Aycocho, Michael Butz, and Barry McConnell) who responded immediately with some very interesting articles and to some others that have contacted me saying that they will contribute articles. The FMA Digest can stay alive and continue in its promotion and promulgation of the Filipino martial arts and the culture of the Philippines.

The first article is a very informative interview with Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts. Then Guru James Hogue explains “Defanging the Snake” as a defensive counter against punches. Joel Huncar who has had several articles about knives in the FMA Digest again gives some handy tips in purchasing a self-defense knife. Learn the main role of a senior student of Amara Arkanis as explained by Phillip Weathers.

December 11, 2009, The Arnis Bill of Law, Republic Act No. 9850, an act declaring Arnis as the National martial arts and sport of the Philippines was signed. Now let’s see how this will affect the art and the practitioners of the Philippines.

What makes up the basics of Filipino martial arts known as Eskrima, Arnis or Kali? A new column by Marc Lawrence called “Building Blocks of FMA” is making its debut and it is and through this column information will be brought forth on the basics so non-practitioners and practitioners will understand what the Filipino fighting arts are built upon which make the Filipino martial arts a dynamic and most interesting martial art.

The FMA Digest, FMA Pulse, and MyFMA.net are working together to educate and serve as a resource for the current and new generations of Filipino martial arts enthusiasts. And in so doing the FMA Pulse and MyFMA.net will have a column to tell you the reader what is going on at their websites so you can visit and gain knowledge and continuously be informed of the most up to date information.

The FMA Digest Representative is a position that has been created to help bring you the reader more information on the Filipino martial arts. Marc Lawrence is the first to attain the position, and it is hoped that others will be added. What is an FMA Digest Representative; it is someone that represents the FMA Digest at events, collecting articles etc... working with the FMA Digest. Some have said they represented the FMA Digest for whatever reason and they did not. Now if they are listed they truly have the full backing of the FMA Digest and are honest, reliable, have integrity, and are professionals.

**Maraming Salamat Po**

# Grandmaster Christopher ‘Topher’ Ricketts

## The Best of the Best

By David Foggie

Photos provided by David Foggie, except where indicated [\*\*] which are Courtesy of Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts

Grandmaster Christopher N. Ricketts or ‘Master Topher’ now resides in the USA where he now teaches under the banner of ‘Ilustrisimo USA’. Recognized as one of the founders and the Chief Instructor of Bakbakan International, whose motto is Matira Matibay (the best of the best), Grandmaster Ricketts’ credentials in the Filipino martial arts and martial arts in general are second to none.

A senior disciple of the revered founder of Kali Ilustrisimo, Grandmaster Antonio ‘Tatang’ Ilustrisimo, Master Topher was one of his closest and most senior students known as the ‘Five Pillars of Kali Ilustrisimo’ and remains loyal to the memory and legacy of his teacher. During these years, he was also a close friend and training partner of Punong Guro Edgar G. Sulite, who founded Lameco Eskrima. At the time of the passing of Punong Guro Sulite, Master Topher was the highest ranked black belt in Lameco Eskrima and designated successor. With such well rounded skills in Filipino martial arts, Master Topher is recognized as one of the world’s most respected masters. Additionally he is qualified to teach several other martial arts including Ngo Cho Kuen (5 Ancestor Fist), Sagasa, as well as being a professional boxing trainer. Master Topher’s skills and credentials are impeccable and second to none; he is one of the best of the best.

Through an introduction from my teacher, Grandmaster Roland Dantes in 1998, I have been fortunate to benefit from Master Topher’s extensive knowledge and experience. Knowing the high regard in which my instructor and many other respected elders of FMA (Filipino martial arts) hold Master Topher, it was an opportunity not to be missed.

When I first observed Master Topher demonstrate Kali Ilustrisimo in his home, I knew I was in the presence of a genuine master of the art. During our training sessions, the true scope of Master Topher’s knowledge became apparent, as did his effective use of body mechanics. Master Topher introduced me to the principles and techniques that form the foundation and the core of Kali Ilustrisimo, and with a sharp eye for perfect form and understanding, he meticulously dissected and corrected each technique until he was satisfied.

The time spent training under master Topher as afforded me the opportunity to see the various aspects of this remarkable martial artist. He is a fighter, a teacher and friend to his students. Martial arts are meant to be about honor, respect, integrity, loyalty and dedication. Master Topher embodies all these traits and as such it is easy to see why Grandmaster Dantes and many other respected masters are his friends.



It was with the approval of my teacher, Grandmaster Roland Dantes that I began studying Kali Ilustrisimo under Master Topher, and as such, I consider him also to be my teacher. More importantly, he is a respected, loyal and values friend. It is my pleasure and honor to present this interview.

This interview is the synthesis of an interview I put together with the much valued and appreciated assistance of Guro Dino Flores and part of Grandmaster Ricketts interview which is to be featured in a Filipino martial arts book Grandmaster Dantes and I were working on at the time of his passing last year. Rest assured the book will be printed as Grandmaster Roland Dantes dreamed it would be. However, we are submitting this interview to be featured in the FMA Digest, since Grandmaster Roland valued and respected the work Punong Guro Steven Dowd was doing in promoting the Filipino martial arts. Also, myself and others feel Grandmaster Ricketts deserves the

exposure and recognition he truly deserves.

**Question:** Grandmaster Topher, firstly you are based in San Diego, USA and now teach under the name Ilustrisimo USA? Why is this?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Actually I just teach under the name Ilustrisimo. USA is just where I happen to be at this point in time. The [www.ilustrisimousa.com](http://www.ilustrisimousa.com) site is just one of my information portals available. I still have my Philippine base, as well as various representatives worldwide. All these things that I have mentioned will be clarified when we open up the official Ilustrisimo website in the near future. Everything will be made clear, simple and centralized.

I am distinguishing myself for various reasons, one of which is the sincere effort to preserve some of the original methods of tatang and separate it from some of the later variations.

**Question:** *Grandmaster Ilustrisimo is celebrated as one of the greatest Grandmasters of the Filipino martial arts. How did you come to hear of Grandmaster Ilustrisimo and become accepted by him as a student?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I heard of Tatang and met him through introduction by my good friend Alex Co, an influential martial arts practitioner, publisher and driving force in the Philippine martial arts world. It was the same time that I met Edgar Sulite, Yuli Romo and Tony Diego. When we met for some reason the old man took a liking to me and thus I was accepted as one of his students.

**Question:** *What do you remember of your initial meeting?*



The legendary and revered Grandmaster Antonio "Tatang" Ilustrisimo Founder of Kali Ilustrisimo [\*\*]

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** When I first saw him he did not strike me as anything special, just an old man. However, when he started moving it was poetry in motion. To be direct, if it wasn't for Tatang I would have little interest in the Philippine warrior arts.

**Question:** *During your first training session under Tatang what material did he cover?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** There was no set method. You just had to attack him and see what happened. It was usually painful and it was up to you to absorb his flow.

**Question:** *Prior to studying under Grandmaster Antonio Tatang' Ilustrisimo did you have much exposure to the Filipino martial arts?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Prior to Kali Ilustrisimo my training included the Rapillon style of Mang Sciano Cleope in 1967. He was a well-known eskrimador from Quezon province of the Philippines and I was a training partner of his son, Edgar Cleope. For a little

while I trained with Jimmy Gales in his arnis style which he called Sphinx. He used the centro baston (central grip) and susi (inverted grip) styles of wielding a stick. I also trained with Doc Lengson in the Arnis Federation of the Philippines style from 1973-1978.

**Question:** *Jimmy Gales, now there is a name from the past. Anything you would like to share about your training with him and the Sphinx style?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I was never a student of his. I just used to visit their gym to see my friend Lito Ong (AKA 'Jules King'), an actor in the Philippines. Lito was the one who became a student of Gales.

**Question:** *Having been exposed to other systems of arnis, why did you decide to follow Tatang? What attracted you and what made his system so different?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Various strategies attracted me to Tatang's method. I found Tatang to be direct, efficient, effective and to the point. It has minimal flowery movements and there is a natural flow with continuous movement, like a real fight.

Once you truly understand the fundamentals, you respond instinctively without thought and respond appropriately to a situation. Tatang has proven this on countless occasions just as it has assisted me on occasion. It appears simple on the surface, yet in reality there is a deeper true meaning.

**Question:** *You say there is a deeper true meaning. Please elaborate.*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** This is one of those things that cannot be explained in words. It must be experienced.

**Question:** *Were there many dif-*

Great Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo with his student Master Ricketts and members of Bakbakan in Manila [\*\*]



ferences in the way Grandmaster Ilustrisimo moved and his fighting techniques compared to the other Filipino martial arts systems you had learnt?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** There were a lot of differences. For one thing when sparring Tatang you never saw the technique, you just felt it.

**Question:** *Totally instinctive reactions to a threat and/or attack are necessary. How did Grandmaster Ilustrisimo approach developing this in his students and do you follow his approach?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Sparring and painful feeding drill; AKA praksyon.

**Question:** *Praksyon (also spelt prakcion) is a corruption of the word fraction. What is your interpretation of this principle?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** It is something along the lines of intercepting an intent (attack) in a fraction of a second.

Again, this must be experienced

not explained.

**Question:** *How do you approach teaching and guiding the student in developing the ability and skill to apply this concept in combat?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I use various levels of sparring and the realistic drills only after deep understanding of the original core techniques.

**Question:** *What about combate heneral and trunkada heneral?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** They are part of the original core techniques.

**Question:** *How does the student develop the ability and skill to apply these concepts against an attacker?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** They develop the ability once again, through various levels of sparring and the realistic drills only after deep understanding of the original core techniques.

**Question:** *Broken rhythm was used by Tatang skillfully. What can you tell us about this and how can a person develop and refine this skill?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The broken rhythm is difficult to teach. I first heard it from Punong Guro Edgar Sulite. His father Helacrio Sulite trained with Melicio Ilustrisimo, the uncle of Tatang.

**Question:** *Since Tatang was a fighter and did not teach in the usual structured manner, what were the difficulties in learning from him?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** He had no set patterns, just instinctive reactions which were rarely the same as the last reaction.

**Question:** *Did this make learning difficult?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Before

systemization, Ilustrisimo's art was still raw and pure. Almost virgin like, as prior to our pursuit it was only revealed in a real situation. It was free of showmanship, direct and purely functional for combat; however it was difficult to learn and always painful, as you usually had to get hit for the technique to be revealed. Only those with time, dedication and a high threshold for pain and tolerance were able to eventually understand Ilustrisimo's methods

The good points about systemization is that it is easier to teach and a lot less painful! Keep in mind though that systemization by someone other than the founder is their own interpretation. This can be seen in the different way each of the five pillars of Ilustrisimo teaches the art. There are many similarities but there are also differences, reflecting the experience of each individual. Tatang was one of a kind; that will likely never be replicated.

**Question:** *A very valid point. Do you feel the systemization of Kali Ilustrisimo has seen the system lose anything? Are there any bad points?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** There is always the influence of the systemizers interpretation. This is why I am reorganizing the way I teach and classify. Separate the original and proven techniques from the later variations. I am not saying one is better; I just want the root to be clear and always distinguishable.

**Question:** *Could learning in an unstructured manner have been a blessing since it made you ask more questions and your search for understanding forced you to look at his approach differently?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Because it was not spoon fed to us, I was forced to dissect and analyze the art in ways I had not had to do before.

**Question:** *Since Tatang taught in an unstructured fashion, what was the teaching progression?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** A true practitioner of Kali Ilustrisimo will have totally instinctive reaction with no set pattern. Tatang never responded the same way to the same angle of attack. He movements were so natural and a wonder to behold.

Tatang did not teach you in the traditional sense. If you simulated an attack angle, he would instinctively (and painfully) respond. It was up to you to understand and absorb the techniques used. There was no progression, forms or structure. The main structures and progressions being taught to the public these days are individual interpretations of the original 5 pillars of Kali Ilustrisimo. The 5 pillars of Ilustrisimo being Tony Diego, Yuli Romo, Rey Galang, Edgar Sulite and myself.

After Tatang's death, all kinds of people came out of the woodwork making all manner of claims on how the old man moved. Fortunately I am in possession of hundreds of hours of video footage taken of Tatang in action over a period of 15 years. It can confirm and dispute many of the claims out there based on this evidence. Anybody who doubts this is welcome to view the archives. Let your own eyes be the judge.

**Question:** *What material was originally taught?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The core or pure techniques such as de cade-na, bagsak, etc were contained.

These will be reflected in the pure core of the system reorganization.

**Question:** *During your time training under Tatang, what was the emphasis during your training with him?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The emphasis was on spontaneity and pain. One of us would simulate an attack, he would instinctively and painfully react, and then during our free time we would try and decipher what we had seen. Because there was no curriculum, we had to learn techniques by experiencing them.

**Question:** *What do you feel you picked up due to the amount of sparring you did with Grandmaster Ilustrisimo?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** As I have said, I never saw the techniques, I only felt them. I only got to see and dissect what had occurred after I reviewed the video footage. At the time I was the only martial artist I knew of in Manila that had a video camera. This is to my advantage.

**Question:** *When the system was being systematized and a progressive syllabus being developed, who was involved?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** *The five pillars: Antonio "Tony" Diego, Epifanio "Yuli" Romo, Edgar Sulite, myself and Rey Galang.*

**Question:** *It is said you were instrumental in introducing sparring into Kali Ilustrisimo and provided much advice from your experience to help develop your fellow students' skills. Is that correct?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Prior to me joining the Ilustrisimo's core group, sparring was done only occasionally. I insisted it be done regularly, which we usually did at my house. My experiences in

full contact martial arts sparring and ring boxing assisted greatly in developing this aspect.

**Question:** Do you think Tatang was trying to develop and instill specific qualities in yourself and his other students?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Tatang was a pure fighter. He had little interest in teaching. It was not until he was in his 80s and retired that he started teaching in Luneta Park. He only taught to get a little spending money for extracurricular fun

As for developing and instilling specific qualities in his students, Tatang couldn't care less. His main concern was it saved his life on his many adventures as merchant marine and guerrilla fighter in World War II.

**Question:** *What variations of weapons did Tatang teach?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** He taught single and double sword, espada y daga (sword and dagger), dos manos (double handed grip for a long stick or sword), solo baston, knife and empty hands.

**Question:** *From your view, what areas did he specialize in?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** He specialized in any bladed weapon.

**Question:** *Did you learn his methods of learning the handkerchief, rope and chain?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I focused mostly on blade.

**Question:** *Like Tatang, I believe in teaching a student double sword/baston before solo sword/baston. Is this how you were taught?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** No, we sparred and did realistic drills were he would actually strike me.

**Question:** *Did Grandmaster Ilustrisimo elaborate on why he commenced students learning double*

swords/baston before the usual approach of teaching single first?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I was taught the single sword first.



**Question:** Could you please share with us the primary fighting strategies of Kali Ilustrisimo?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Some of the primary fighting strategies of Kali Ilustrisimo include: de cadena, sak sak, bagsak, and V-strike. These are mainly finishing moves, as in a real blade confrontation it is over quickly.

**Question:** The *lutang* (floating) footwork of Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo is very unique. What can you tell us about it?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** *Lutang* means to float and it is a unique footwork of Tatang's. It involves temporarily being on one foot while the other leg "floats". Although it looks unusually elegant, it can generate tremendous power and reach. It also allows you to move in and out and then back in from various ranges of combat in an instant. It is classic Tatang. Simple yet sophisticated. Beautiful but deadly.

**Question:** The techniques of Kali Ilustrisimo are noticeably sword based, whereas many styles are either stick based or evolved to be-

ing stick arts. What is your view?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Kali Ilustrisimo is definitely a sword-based art; even the stick is treated as a sword. Kali means sword in one of the dialects of the Philippines, thus Kali Ilustrisimo means the sword of Ilustrisimo. The rattan stick is a training device that represents the sword.

**Question:** What about the claim sticks can be replaced by swords and it is the same?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** There is no doubt that they are both deadly weapons. However, there are differences. In non-bladed arts, practitioners tend to grab the stick in a way that if it were a blade, they would surely be cut. In non-bladed tournaments the participants hit each other just as much as they get hit. There is no respect for the weapon or defense. In a bladed match, they would both be dead. Maybe it is good for a sport, but not for the bladed arts, as long as the distinction is made.

**Question:** Did Grandmaster Ilustrisimo ever discuss when and why many of the styles changed to stick focused systems?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** No.

**Question:** Since Kali Ilustrisimo was and remains a genuine sword system, how does it differ from stick systems?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** There is very little room for error with a blade.

**Question:** As a true sword and bladed system, Kali Ilustrisimo's disarms always assume you are disarming an edged weapon. What do you feel are the benefits of this?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** You never develop bad habits.

**Question:** From the viewpoint of

Kali Ilustrisimo, please explain its approach to disarming techniques?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** It is always treated as a blade.

**Question:** This sees the system staying true to its origins and not changing into a stick oriented system?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Correct.

**Question:** Tatang was very practical. What can you tell us about his approach to defending against a knife attack unarmed?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** His movements are always based on the original pure core techniques.

**Question:** What is your approach to defending against edged weapon attacks? Can there be too many drills taught?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Drills are always good to condition your movements and mind. As long as you're honest with yourself and realize that actual combat is a lot simpler, direct, and bloodier than drills.

If you can run, do so. If not, find an equalizer.

**Question:** Do some practitioners become caught up in the fancy and elaborate defenses and forget the practicality which is necessary to survive?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes.

**Question:** Do you feel it is necessary to learn and become proficient at disarming techniques?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes.

**Question:** You adhere to a very practical approach in your training as well as your teaching. How do you view and approach teaching stick and knife disarms?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Simplicity. Never wrestle for a disarm and never look for a disarm. Only do it if an opportunity arises. Always





treat the weapon as a blade.

**Question:** It is better to possess an understanding of the general principles of disarming?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes, knowledge is power. Better to have something, than nothing. Just be realistic about what would actually work.

**Question:** From your experience, what are the facts and myths of edged weapons and defending against them?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** If you have the option to run, run. 99% of the time you'll get cut, especially with the style of blades today. If you have no other option but to engage, be direct and finish quickly. Plus, always remember that even if your opponent dead or dying, they will still likely be thrusting and slashing their weapon.

**Question:** Was knife to knife an area Tatang regularly taught?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Tatang taught what Tatang felt like. I was just happy to be there.

**Question:** Tatang's knife techniques were simple, direct and most important of all, effective. What was his approach?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The most advanced technique you can have is the one you can feel before you see.

**Question:** What areas were stressed when he taught knife?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Disruptive interception and intent.

**Question:** Were drills an aspect of his knife methodology?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** No drills, just feeding and sparring.

**Question:** Did he use and teach you both saber and ice pick grips in using the knife?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Both.

**Question:** Grandmaster Ilustrisimo was a firm believer and was known for his spirituality. What can you share with us about this area? Did he ever discuss these with you?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Not too much. He had anting anting and practiced oracion.

**Question:** Was he knowledgeable in healing skills such as hilot?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I am not certain.

**Question:** Tatang possessed the mindset of a true warrior. Is this what has become known as, dakip diwa? Did Tatang discuss this?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Never heard of it.

**Question:** Reloj de areana (hour-glass shape). How was this explained by Tatang to you and how does it relate to combat?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** This term was coined by one of the senior students of Tatang.

**Question:** There have been discussions about which is the correct name of Tatang's system: Kali Ilustrisimo or Kalis Ilustrisimo. Through the years I have heard it referred to as Olistrisimo (an acronym of the words olisi meaning stick and the Ilustrisimo name). Would you like to comment on this?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** During the whole time I was training, I never heard Tatang use any of these terms. The five pillars referred it as Kali Ilustrisimo only so we could have something to call it. Tatang had no name for the art in my observation. It was only after his death that all these other versions began to surface.

**Question:** What can you tell us about Tatang? History, stories, etc?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** This could be a rather lengthy answer worthy of volumes. Perhaps I will write a second book on Kali Ilustrisimo to answer these questions.

**Question:** Tatang was taught by his father, Isidro Ilustrisimo and his uncle Melicio Ilustrisimo. What did he tell you of these Eskrimadors and their teaching of him?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Not much.

**Question:** What about Pedro Cortez? Did he also receive instruction from him and was he taught by relatives of Tatang?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** He just told me he was one of his teachers in Mindanao.

**Question:** Melicio and Regino Ilustrisimo were the uncles of Tatang. What do you know of their styles and were they the same as Tatang?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I did not

meet the uncles of Antonio Ilustrisimo personally. However, during his research for his landmark book, 'Masters of Arnis, Kali and Eskrima', Edgar Sulite met them both on Bantayan Island. According to Edgar, their styles, although founded upon the same root system, were now different. In other words, Tatang's style had evolved through a lifetime of actual combat experience throughout the Philippines and the world.

**Question:** *I believe Grandmaster Dan Inosanto met and received some training from Regino Ilustrisimo. Have you spoken with Grandmaster Inosanto about this as you know him and have conducted seminars at his school?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** No I haven't asked him.

**Question:** *It has been said Timoteo Maranga as a youth carried Tatang's weapon for him prior to challenges. What is known of their relationship?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** They were drinking buddies.

**Question:** *The Ilustrisimo's, Saavedras and Romos were the three most prominent families involved in eskrima at one time in Cebu. Did he know them?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Siguro (probably).

**Question:** *Is it known if he knew Islao Romo who it is said is related to his student, Yuli Romo?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Siguro (probably).

**Question:** *Having met Grandmaster Floro Villabrille in Hawaii decades ago, I am aware he was related to Tatang. Was he taught by Tatang?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** He was married to the cousin of Tatang

which allowed him to be a student. Otherwise there is no way he would have received instruction during that period in time.

**Question:** *Tatang knew Felicisimo Dizon and his student, Grandmaster Angel Cabales who went on to become the Founder of Serrada Escrima. Did he talk of them and if so, what can you tell us?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Punong Guro Edgar G. Sulite asked this question of Tatang before he died. A student of ours, Steve Tarani, was present while I filmed the interview. With respects to the departed, I will leave it at that. They were friends. However from my observation of the style, there is no relationship at all.

**Question:** *Mark Wiley met and trained with the Kali Ilustrisimo group in the Philippines. Do you see any Kali Ilustrisimo influence in Serrada Escrima and if yes, in what areas?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I see no relationship.

**Question:** *WWII saw Tatang defending his country against the Japanese. Did he discuss his experiences from this period?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes.

**Question:** *What do you know of Tatang being a berdugo (executioner) of the makapili (traitors) towards the end of the war?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** He told me the story. It was one of his many jobs in his lifetime.

**Question:** *Since he was a true warrior, how did you feel and what was it like training with a man in possession of a true combative mentality?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** It never crossed my mind at the time. All I wanted to do was absorb as much

possible and practice intensely.

**Question:** *Did Grandmaster Ilustrisimo ever open up and elaborate on his challenges and/or real life fights?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** He told me many stories, however my focus as I said was to absorb and apply his methods. I am a fighter not a historian. I wasn't too interested in the past, just the present.

**Question:** *Tatang was greatly respected for his combat skills. During your time with him, did you ever witness him being challenged or having to use his skills?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Tatang was respected by all. I never witnessed anyone dare challenge him. He was feared or respected by all that knew him.

**Question:** *Having survived many fights, what was Tatang's primary strategy in dealing with multiple attackers?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The original core techniques never change. Tatang's high level allowed him to handle one or more opponents in a collective manner.

**Question:** *You are renowned for placing emphasis on physical conditioning. What led you to this?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** My experience as a professional boxing trainer when I had a stable of fighters and the intense workouts of Doc Lengson's KAFEPHIL style were what led me to appreciate the importance of physical conditioning.

**Question:** *Dr. Guillermo Lengson was a remarkable man. How did you come to study under him?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** During the KAFEPHIL days, I was introduced to Doc by an instructor under him, Chito Santos. Doc took

Grandmaster Guillermo Lengson [\*\*]



a liking to me and adopted me in a way. I not only look to him as a teacher, but also a father figure.

**Question:** *Dr Lengson combined linear and circular movements. What can you tell us of his arnis system?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Doc Lengson started Arnis with sinawali and Cinko Teros systems as he is from Pangasinan province in the Philippines. When he first met Remy Presas, Remy was still Balintawak and Doc was impressed with the movements and added some concepts to his system. Doc and Remy met before Modern Arnis. Most of the circular motions, he learned from Johnny Chiuten who was a kung fu and Balintawak Master.

I used to watch Remy and Doc train together in Doc's dental clinic in the University of the East in Manila. I was 14 at the time.

**Question:** *It has been told in the Philippines Dr Lengson shared*

*his vast knowledge of sinawali and double sticks with Professor Remy Presas. Do you know if they exchanged knowledge?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Doc Lengson and Remy Presas met before the formation of Modern Arnis. They were training partners. Remy learned sinawali and Cingko Teros from Doc Lengson, which he put in Modern Arnis. Remy also learned karate from Doc Lengson, as he was considered the best in the Philippines at that time. In return, Remy taught him some of his Balintawak techniques. It was also Doc Lengson who came up with the name Modern Arnis.

**Question:** *Sagasa is one of Dr Lengson's legacies. Could you explain how he came to develop Sagasa?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Doc Lengson developed Sagasa through constant full-contact tournaments with other martial arts associations. At the time, he was considered the best in karate in the Philippines. Because of this, all the other organizations would gang up on his group and go as far



L-R: unnamed person, Grandmaster Lengson, Grandmaster Ricketts [\*\*]

as the judges cheating in their decisions during tournaments. Consequently, Doc Lengson had to come up with techniques that would make it clear that they were the undisputed winner of a competition. These techniques were developed primarily through Master Johnny Chiuten and his kung fu style, in which Doc Lengson developed the training method for teaching. Initially these techniques had been secret, as Doc Lengson used it for his position in KAFEPHIL's election through sparring. In other words, whoever won all the sparring matches among the candidates became the head of KAFEPHIL.

**Question:** *John Pintoy told me Dr Lengson was very knowledgeable in the area of body mechanics and emphasized the use of the hips. Did he stress this in your training and how important do you think it is for the student to comprehend the significance of body mechanics?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The emphasis was always on the hips and always exaggerated, so to the untrained eye it would look unusual. All real power comes from the hips and not just for attacking, but also evading and defending.

**Question:** *The intensive drills, which are called series, develop and refine coordination, power and reflexes. Were these developed by Dr Lengson?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Doc Lengson developed the Sagasa series in collaboration with Johnny Chiuten.

**Question:** *How did Dr Lengson influence the drills and curriculum of Bakbakan?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Sagasa Kickboxing is one of the core systems of Bakbakan. Among other things, it led Bakbakan to empha-

size practical and functional techniques with full contact sparring. It also underlined the importance of the hip and body placement in sparring.

**Question:** *Who are the surviving senior students of Grandmaster Lengson?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Rey Dizer, Johnny Pintoy (the brother of Grandmaster Roland Dantes) and Badong Alina are the surviving senior students.

**Question:** *You were a close friend of Punong Guor Edgar Sulite. How did you meet him and do you have any fond memories you would like to share?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Edgar G. Sulite was one of my closest friends. I met him through another close friend of mine, Alex Co, a pioneer publisher in the Philippines of martial arts books and magazines. Alex asked me to check whether Edgar was the real McCoy because Edgar wanted to discuss the publication of a book. After meeting Edgar, I reported that he was indeed the real thing and the rest is history. Alex ended up publishing all three of Edgar's books: *Secrets of Arnis*, *Advanced Balisong* and *Masters of Arnis, Kali and Eskrima*.

The Masters of Anis, Kali

and Eskrima was a landmark book because it was the first time a researcher traveled throughout the entire Philippines to research the art and publish it in a book. It revealed many relatively unknown systems to the world and opened many doors for future researchers and practitioners. I am happy to have been a participant in bringing these projects to light.

**Question:** *What was it like training with Punong Guro Sulite? Was Lameco Eskrima founded at the time?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Lameco Eskrima was already founded at the time. However it was still evolving and Kali Ilustrisimo was the finishing touch. Training with Edgar was fun and enlightening for the both of us and we became training partners. There were lots of live and instinctive drills. Constant research, experimentation and sparring, sparring, sparring. We had lots of painful bumps and bruises because back then we had no safety gear. It was very educational for the both of us.

Punong Guro Edgar G. Sulite was a true scholar, gentleman and warrior.

**Question:** *With the unfortunate passing of Punong Guro Sulite, you became the highest ranked*

*black belt in Lameco Eskrima. Are you presently teaching the system?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** No. I will leave the future to his son, Edgar Sulite Jr. He is my official appointed heir to the Lameco Eskrima International system. Edgar Sulite Jr. trained under me for many years in the Philippines while his father was in the USA preparing for the eventual arrival of the family. I trust Edgar Sulite Jr. to make many wise decisions. He is like family to me.

**Question:** *Has Edgar Jr. continued his training and taken his rightful place in Lameco Eskrima?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes.

**Question:** *You were very close to Tatang. What are some of your fond memories of him and your time together?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** There are so many. Very few had the privilege to spar Tatang regularly as I did, but there is one occasion I will not soon forget.

In general, Tatang was a respectful gentleman. However, on this particular day I kept telling Tatang that he was not able to hit me. I was doing this in order to see how the old man would press his attack and possibly reveal some new strategies and techniques; a sacrifice so to speak. Immediately Tatang stood up and began striking me in the head. He quickly feinted left, and then suddenly struck me in the right eye with an inside De Cadena attack. Tatang struck me so hard I actually believed he had knocked my eye ball out and so I dropped to the ground in search of my eyeball! When I realized my



**Great friends:** Grandmaster Ricketts with the late Founder of Lameco Eskrima, Grandmaster Edgar G. Sulite [\*\*]

eye was still intact, I stood up and Tatang asked if I was okay. When I said I was fine, without hesitation he continued his barrage of attacks upon me. Tatang was always willing to fight to the end, even in training sessions. Now that he has gone, even the painful memories have become fond memories.

**Question:** *Tell us what was legendary and special about Grandmaster Ilustrisimo for newcomers that may not know?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** During the infamous organized crime wars of the 1950s, the crime lords of the two rival factions sought the protection skills of Tatang. Some of the toughest Tondo mobsters in the Philippines history recognized and respected Tatang.

**Question:** *In your years of teaching, do you feel that students want the fast service approach, i.e., quickly moving through the material?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I have never experienced it personally. Usually when students want to learn from me they know I mean business and they in turn must be committed and dedicated. Otherwise, I will just refer them to someone else.

**Question:** *Are you concerned that with the proliferation of unqualified teachers attempting to cash in on the popularity of the Filipino martial arts, the true intention of the art will be lost?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Naturally I am concerned with the preservation of all the arts in their purest form. Personally, my main concern is with Kali Ilustrisimo. After the death of Tatang, many people suddenly appeared claiming to represent Kali Ilustrisimo. These people are mainly good at talking and

making theories. However, this is not enough. You must also practice Tatang's real techniques and be able to apply them.

Many people are good at talking, but when it comes to sparring they either decline or perform very badly. Unfortunately, there are people exploiting the Ilustrisimo name but are actually teaching their own personal vision. When teaching you must make the distinction between your version and the original. If people are not honest and this keeps up, the art will continue to be watered down and may eventually be lost.

Also since the passing of Tatang, there have been many people publicly proclaiming to be "certified" by Tatang. There are all manners of scenarios: some spent a week, a month or just took a photo with Tatang to become "certified". There are very few credible martial arts that will even consider certifying anyone with even two years of dedicated training, let alone two weeks. There is even a story of people helping Tatang with his medical bills in his twilight years and thus being awarded certification for their help.

There will always be unscrupulous people that will say anything to become "known" in the martial arts, even at the expense of the art. Because of these facts, my main focus is now is concentration on Tatang's original core techniques, the roots of his system which I always differentiate from drills developed by the five pillars. Who is to say what is original and what is not? On top of the fact I was one of his most physically dedicated students, the hundreds of hours of Tatang's film archives that I have of him in action speak for themselves. The

majority of what is being pushed as Kali Ilustrisimo was never done by Tatang. Let your eyes be the judge. Once again, it is personal interpretations.

Being one of the five pillars of Kali Ilustrisimo and spending countless hours with Tatang, I take great offense at the actions of pretenders. I have dedicated a good portion of my life to this art. It is a part of me. Regardless of these facts, I will always attempt to settle misunderstandings as a gentleman, first and foremost. However, if this course of action fails, I will not hesitate to settle it as an Eskrimador. It is after all, the "Warrior Arts" and not the "Verbal Debating Arts". I have full confidence in what Tatang has passed on to me; most do not.

**Question:** *Master Topher, you are carrying on the legacy of your teacher, Grandmaster Antonio 'Tatang' Ilustrisimo. How does that make you feel?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** When I started training in Kali Ilustrisimo I never expected that it would come to this point. I was drawn to this particular art because it was the most practical and effective form of Philippine martial arts that I have encountered. I just wanted to learn with no other motive. My beliefs in his skills were further reinforced judging by the way all other masters we encountered together treated him. He was simply the best of his generation and they all treated him accordingly.

Now I am seeing all kinds of glory hungry individuals out there trying to exploit Tatang's name for fame and money. A few legitimate ones out there, but most are a joke. So now I must make an effort to preserve his teaching in the purest way I can. Naturally I

will have drills and interpretations that are my own or that of the five pillars. However I was trained in, observed and archived the pure techniques. By pure, I mean the techniques that Tatang constantly repeated over the many years of my training. These techniques are always direct and simple, devoid of flowery movements. I have separated these movements into their own category as to not confuse it with the interpretation of the five pillars.

**Question:** *What are your thoughts on the legacy of Grandmaster Ilustrisimo?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Let's just put it this way. If it wasn't for Tatang I would not be practicing the Philippine warrior arts.

**Question:** *What do you feel made him so good? Was it his natural abilities, his fighting system and training methods?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** A combination of all of the above.

**Question:** *How proud do you think Tatang would be, knowing his art has continued to be taught and is respected worldwide?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I think he would find it amusing. He would be proud in some instances, but bewildered in some cases, on the verge of anger. Some of the stuff out there claiming to be Ilustrisimo just should not be associated with Tatang's name.

I think Tatang would be saddened that politics has infected our group. When it was still the core group, practice was fun for many years. None of us were doing it for self-promotion or ego inflation. It was like a family. It was not until people who were not in the original group made their way in. This is where the problems

began. Unfortunately, there will always be people that exist who will say or do anything to become "famous".

**Question:** *Looking back, did either of you think his system would be embraced by martial artists like it has been?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** We knew it was a unique treasure among Philippine martial arts. It was just a matter of time before the world would also start to realize it.

**Question:** *Without a doubt you are largely to be applauded for this and for carrying his legacy.*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The five pillars have all done their part. With this said, I am disgusted with some of the followers under some of the five pillars. They are constantly trying to divide us in order to gain favor. They also show no respect for the other seniors of Kali Ilustrisimo. To me this is a sign of motives without honor and disrespect to the system.

**Question:** *In a nutshell, what are the differences in how you learnt from Tatang and how you teach today?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Throughout the years up until his death, I was constantly learning, dissecting, experimenting, analyzing and observing his movements. After Tatang's death, I continued to do the same with what I had retained. Now I have come a full circle back to his original techniques: minimal, uncomplicated, and effective. When I went back and reviewed the hundreds of hours of film archives on Tatang, it confirmed that I am on the right path. And still in wonder of my teacher's abilities.

**Question:** *Would you say the teaching progression you devel-*

*oped has fine-tuned the manner in which the art is taught to the students?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** My teaching progressions teach a student to instinctively react with the techniques of Ilustrisimo. However, it is not something you learn overnight.

**Question:** *How do you ensure the students receive and grasp the essence of the art?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Research, review, dissect, spar and dedicated practice, practice, practice. My emphasis is on constant repetition of basic techniques and sparring.

**Question:** *How long do you believe it takes for the average person to develop adequate skills to protect themselves and deal with street attacks?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** There is no scientific method of determining that factor.

**Question:** *From your experience, can anyone learn Kali Ilustrisimo and master the principles and techniques or does it require/suit individuals with certain abilities or genetics?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** If you don't have an open mind, then forget about trying.

**Question:** *Do you accept there are students who will eventually tailor and develop Kali Ilustrisimo to their own requirements and genetic makeup?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes.

**Question:** *A major misconception with Kali/Eskrima/Arnis is it is only a weapons method of combat. Why is it some people do not see the well rounded composition of it?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Many people are fascinated by weapons and seem to not go beyond that.



Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo and the Bakbakan group [\*\*]

In the process they are missing the core concepts.

**Question:** You were one of the Founders of Bakbakan and its Chief Instructor. What is the history and aim of Bakbakan?

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Bakbakan means something along the lines of a free for all brawl. Bakbakan was founded in 1967 by a group of instructors from various styles of martial arts in the Philippines. Prior to the organization becoming a bastion of martial arts in the Philippines, the main objective of the original members was to elevate their fighting skills through constant full contact sparring.

Originally there were only six of us: Ding Binay, Rolly Maximo, Christian Gloria, Eddie Ben Alicante, Rey Vizer and myself. We would meet at my house in San Miguel Village in Makati, where my bedroom was our original gym.

**Question:** *Bakbakan is respected worldwide for its integrity in the promotion of the combative arts of the Philippines. You should be very proud since you yourself have set the standard.*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes. I am very proud and humbled at how well we are received around the world.

**Question:** *When I was training under you in the Philippines, you stressed you only teach Kali Ilustrisimo. Does this still hold true?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes.

**Question:** *Why do you not teach Lameco Eskrima or Bakbakan Kali?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** It is what I have focused on. It is my core style. This does not mean I do not

gain from observing other systems.

**Question:** *What is the difference between Kali Ilustrisimo as you teach it and Bakbakan Kali (Ilustrisimo)?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** The difference is Kali Ilustrisimo is Topher Ricketts and Bakbakan Kali is Rey Galang's.

**Question:** *What if any advice could you offer someone to look for when seeking a genuine Kali Ilustrisimo instructor?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Stick to the five pillars while you can.

**Question:** *You are presently working on an exciting DVD series. Could you tell us about them?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** You will find a new perspective on this truly unique art.

**Question:** *Additionally you are working on an extensive Kali Ilustrisimo book. What will the book encompass?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** It will actually be a series of books. Some books will cover the original core techniques and some with methods to develop these techniques.

**Question:** *During your decades of martial arts training, you have*



A Gathering of some of the Senior Members of Bakbakan International.

Dodong Sta. Iglesia, Ding Binay, Ronnie Ricketts, Rolly Maximo, Rey Galang, Rey Dizer, Topher Ricketts, Edgar Aristorenas and Tony Diego [\*\*]



**L-R:** Grandmaster Antonio ‘Tony’ Diego, Punong Guro Edgar G. Sulite, Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts, Grandmaster Rey Galang, Grandmaster Alex Co [\*\*]

*studied and become proficient in several systems including boxing. Why?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I am a true lover of the warrior arts from forms to practical applications. I do it because I truly enjoy it. Boxing has some of the best full contact, conditioning and training methods that exist.

**Question:** *Did you encounter difficulty learning and then applying the different techniques and concepts?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** No not at all. I enjoy every aspect of learning.

**Question:** *Would you agree the primary objective is to prepare the student to be able to defend themselves should the need arise?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** In the Philippines, it is always for self-defense.

**Question:** *You have trained elite military units in various countries. Do you believe arnis serves as a practical combat method in these modern times?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes. Technology may change and sometimes even fail, but the physical human body is the same.

**Question:** *Though you yourself have competed in various forms of competitions, do you believe Filipino martial arts competition can develop bad habits?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Yes. Most tournaments forget about defense and just press the attack. They get hit as many times as they hit with little respect for the weapon. They rarely do the art justice. A tournament with protective gear can be good as long as the rules, judges and participants respect the true capabilities of a live weapon at all times. Another way to rectify this is to remove the helmet and other protective gear and use a full live stick. But how many people are willing to do that?

**Question:** *You are known and respected as someone who has used his skills in dangerous street situations. How did these experiences alter your approach to martial arts?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I am now more practical than realistic. When I was young, I practiced controlled sparring and pulled my punches. I used to think that was it until I found out the hard way in a street fight.

**Question:** *What changes did you make as a result of these street fights?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Constant repetition of basics, regular full-contact sparring and honesty with yourself.

**Question:** *As someone respected for their fighting ability, how do you prepare students to take their skills from the class and apply them effectively in the street?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Constant repetition of basics, regular full-contact sparring and honesty with yourself.

**Question:** *I know and agree with your emphasis concentrating on drilling the basics. What is the emphasis and aim of your teachings?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** For a student to be able to eventually naturally execute a technique cor-



rectly without thought. Become an instinctive fighter.

**Question:** *You recently relocated to the USA. Are you presently teaching and how has Kali Ilustrisimo been received?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I am presently teaching and I have a loyal core group focused on the integrity of the art. I have conducted seminars in Las Vegas, New Jersey, Maryland, Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland, Seattle, and Virginia Beach. I am assisted by my son, Guro Bruce and Guro Dino Flores of Lameco Eskrima SOG. Dino has been training under me since 1997, after the passing of his teacher and my friend Edgar Sulite. Presently I am offering small group and private lessons, as well as seminars

Kali Ilustrisimo is being very well received as most of the participants have heard of it. Once they experience it in person, it usually is an eye-opener for practitioners of many styles. It is especially an eye-opener for those who have “supposedly” been learning Kali Ilustrisimo.

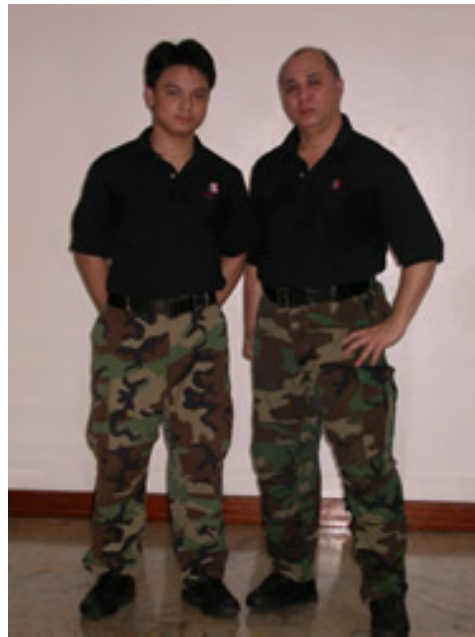
**Question:** *Your son Bruce has been training since I can remember. Tell us about his training in the Philippines and now in the USA?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Bruce began his formal training at 4 years old. He was always surrounded by the arts, as there was a gym at our house in the Philippines. Although he has trained in various arts, his specialty is Kali Ilustrisimo, which he learned under myself and Tony Diego, Sagasa Kickboxing, Thai Boxing, Western Boxing under Dodong Sta. Iglesia and Ngo Cho under Alex Co.

**Question:** *What is the aim with Ilustrisimo USA?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Again, it

Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts and his son, Guro Bruce Ricketts. Following in the steps of his father.





is just plain Ilustrisimo with the USA as one of the regions. I also have people in the Philippines, Australia and around the world. The details of this will be in the upcoming centralized website.

**Question:** *Presently where do you have people representing you and could you please name them?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** At this point all representation is under review. I am currently restructuring. AI must get strict with who represents me if we are to keep Tatang's pure methods alive. I am saddened with the current development and the only thing to do is to ensure I do it right once and for all. All representatives must be trained and informed in these new policies and methods. All of these matters

will be addressed when we launch the official website. We will be doing everything right and by the book. My son Guro Bruce Ricketts will be instrumental in this phase as well as the system officers.

**Question:** *You will be visiting Australia to conduct seminars. What can attendees expect?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** I'll be there soon. Expect Kali Ilustrisimo in its most combative, practical and purest form.

**Question:** *Could you please say a few words to Grandmaster Roland Dantes about the book he is interviewing you and other Grandmasters for?*

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** This book is very long overdue. Grandmaster Roland Dantes is an icon of the

Philippine martial arts and Philippine culture in general. He has not been given the credit he truly deserves. Just the fact he made the first Philippine martial arts movie of international proportions is a grand feat in itself that needs to be given its fair recognition and honor. He is a true warrior, gentleman and most of all a friend.

Master Topher, thank you very much.

**Grandmaster Ricketts:** Walang anuman. You are welcome and thank you for your support and interest in the warrior arts of the Philippines.

Master Topher is now residing in the U.S.A. where he is teaching Kali Ilustrisimo in the way that only he can. This offers a remarkable opportunity for those seeking the opportunity to learn true Kali Ilustrisimo as it is intended to be: effective, direct and deadly. For further information visit Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts' web site [www.ilustrisimousa.com](http://www.ilustrisimousa.com) which should be back online shortly.

This interview is a compilation of interviews researched and conducted by Grandmaster Roland Dantes and David Foggie. An earlier interview which was researched and questions compiled by David Foggie, was conducted by Dino Flores on 12th February 2006, Los Angeles.



**L-R:** Guro Dodong Sta. Iglesia, Grandmaster Pepito Robas, Grandmaster Yuli Romo, Grandmaster Vic Sanchez, Grandmaster Rey Galang, Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts, Grandmaster Roland Dantes, Grandmaster Rodel Dagooc, Grandmaster Jerry dela Cruz



**Residence of Grandmaster Ricketts in Manila, Philippines 2004**

**L-R Siting:** Grandmaster Roland Dantes, Grandmaster Jerry dela Cruz, Grandmaster Vic Sanchez, Grandmaster Rodel Dagooc, GM Pepido Robas, GM Yuli Romo

**Standing:** David Foggie, Grandmaster Ricketts, Grandmaster Rey Galang, Guro Dodong Sta. Iglesia



**At the premiere of 'Mano Mano 3 (starring Ronnie and Bruce Ricketts. From the left: Grandmaster Roland Dantes, Grandmaster Ricketts, Grandmaster Rodel Dagooc, Guro Steve Drape, Janice Loke and Grandmaster Vic Sanchez - 2004 Manila, Philippines.**

**Grandmaster Christopher Ricketts**  
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**About the author:** Introduced to the Filipino martial arts by Grandmaster Roland Dantes was an awakening and enlightening experience which reset the course of David's martial arts training. As such, David made the transition to the Filipino martial arts and was fortunate to become a personal student of his teacher.

Having trained in the Philippines several times, David continued his training and research with his principal teacher Grandmaster Dantes and met many masters of the art, as well studying from and becoming a student of Grandmaster Christopher "Topher" Ricketts. Other Grandmasters who were kind enough to spend some time training David include Grandmaster Johnny F. Chiuten, Grandmaster Vic Sanchez and Master Nilo Limpin.

After years of dedicated private study under Grandmaster Dantes, David tested for and was promoted to the rank of Lakan Lima (5th degree black belt) and the title of Ikalawang Guro. This is an immense honor as Grandmaster Dantes never before graded a student to this rank. Valuing and respecting the promotion, David though is insistent he is simply a student of the Filipino martial arts and stresses it is a lifelong pursuit. As such, he uses the title (Taga Turu) as he truly believes he is only a student of the art and an assistant to his teachers.

With the passing of Grandmaster Dantes, David as his most senior student continues to teach Pinagsamang Paraang Arnis. It is up to the himself and a handful of students who trained under the auspices of Grandmaster Dantes at his official school to ensure their teacher's system is in the hands of those they trust as they are now the guardians and custodians of his legacy.

Grandmaster Roland Dantes strived to promote and unite those involved with the Filipino martial arts and with this in mind, David aims to continue the path set by his teacher. Through the years, David has written articles and interviewed some of the Filipino martial arts leading Mas-



L-R: Master Boy Garcia, Mrs Beth Ricketts, Grandmaster Topher, David Foggie, Janice Loke and Grandmaster Vic Sanchez



L-R: Boy Garcia, Dodong Sta. Iglesia, Jim Papadopoulos, Grandmaster Ricketts, David Foggie after training in Manila 2004

ters and these have been published in Australia's premier martial arts magazine 'Blitz', as well as internationally in the Philippines, USA and the UK. Additionally a number of his interviews and photograph sequences were featured in Master Reynaldo S. Galang's publications, "Warrior Arts of the Philippines" and "Masters of the Blade". Having recently hosted

seminars with Grandmaster Bobby Ta- boada Balintawak Eskrima Cuentada System) and Guro Viko Perrine (Kali Ilustrisimo), it is hoped 2010 will see Grandmaster Ricketts visit Australia to conduct seminars.

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# Offensive Use for Defanging the Snake

By Guru James Hogue

Through the years, I have heard about “Defanging the Snake” as a defensive counter against punches. However, I haven’t seen many uses for “Defanging the Snake” as an offensive set of techniques. I don’t really know why the offensive use isn’t so popular, or even taught. However, in this article, we are going to talk about the offensive use for destructions known as “Defanging the Snake”. I hope this article helps you, and adds some more tools to your martial arts toolbox.

My one pet peeve is what I call “The Unmovable Wall.” When someone puts up his guard people try to hit around it. We, as Filipino martial arts practitioners, will strike the arms when they attack us, but not when they are in the guard position. Why? Take a



look at Fig. 1, The Boxer.

Notice the boxer has his hands right in front of his face to protect his head from getting hit. Most people will try to strike around his guard to strike him. I call this “The Unmovable Wall”, not because his arms aren’t moveable, but because they are. However, martial artists won’t move them, and will see them as unmovable.

As I tell my students,

“Why try to hit his head when he is giving you some great targets?” Then to illustrate that point, I take my knuckles and semi-lightly strike their arms, legs, chest, and back. I then ask the student if it would hurt if I was to do this harder. The answer is always yes. Then why aren’t they seeing my arms as a target to defang the snake?

As my teacher taught me, sometimes you have to hit anything until you get the target you want. This held true two decades ago, and still does today. Let’s look at the boxer and his guard in Fig. 2.

The Boxer is standing in Fig. 2 with his hands in front of his face as in Fig. 1. I then do a jab to his hand as shown in Fig. 3. This drives his hand back into his face, making the attacker strike himself with his own hand. I have done this very technique many times in my 20 plus years in security, corrections, and law-enforcement. This rattles your opponent, and gives you an opening for your next move.

I strike to the meaty area of his forearm as in Fig. 5. This not only hurts, but also drives his arm downward, creating an opening for Traps, and/or strikes to his head. Every time someone puts their guard up, I see this as giving me a target to hit. This technique worked well against an amateur boxer I was trying to throw out of a bar I was bouncing in.

In that situation, I asked the boxer to leave, but he just turned around to walk away. I tap him on the shoulder, and he turned with his hands up. I struck his hand with my jab and his other arm with my cross. He yelled in



pain and dropped his guard. I then moved in with a Dumog Lock and threw him out without a fight. Most people are not use to getting their arms hit, and it will be a total shock to their system. Now let talk about “Defanging the Snake” that we know, Guntings. We have seen Guntings over and over until we’re blue in the face. We know if the guy strikes at us, we can destroy it with a knuckle strike as in Fig. 5.

You may wonder, “What if he doesn’t throw a strike at me. Can I still do the Gunting? Yes, Guntings are just as good of an attack as a defense. Just because he isn’t striking, doesn’t make those nerves any less tender.

Let’s take Offense Gunting #1, where Guru Baharu Wayne and I are facing off. This will give you a better understanding of how we use the Of-fensive Destructions to “Defang the Snake.”

Guru Baharu Wayne and I are facing off in Fig. 1. My lead hand checks his lead hand (Fig. 2) as I do a Gunting Strike to his Bra-chial Nerve on the inside of his right bicep as in Figs. 3 and 4. My left hand (lead hand) monitors, and checks Guru Baharu Wayne’s hand downward as I do a back

**Defensive Gunting # 2:**



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3

fist strike as in Fig. 5. This will take the fight to your attacker, and “Defang the Snake” before it can strike. The next Gunting is the known as the, “Back-Fist Gunting” by some systems.

In the typical Back-Fist Gunting, the at-tacker strikes at you as in Fig. 1. Inside parry the attacking hand as your right hand does a safety check. You apply a left-hand back-fist strike to their Brachial Nerve on the inside of his right bicep as in

Fig. 2. Then strike your opponent, and use the fol-low up techniques of your system.

**Offensive Gunting # 2:**

In the offensive version, you’re facing off with your attacker as in Fig. 1. Angle off to your left to create distance from their left hand. Your right hand checks their right hand as you do a back-fist to the inside of their bicep as in Figs. 2

**Offensive Gunting # 1:**



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



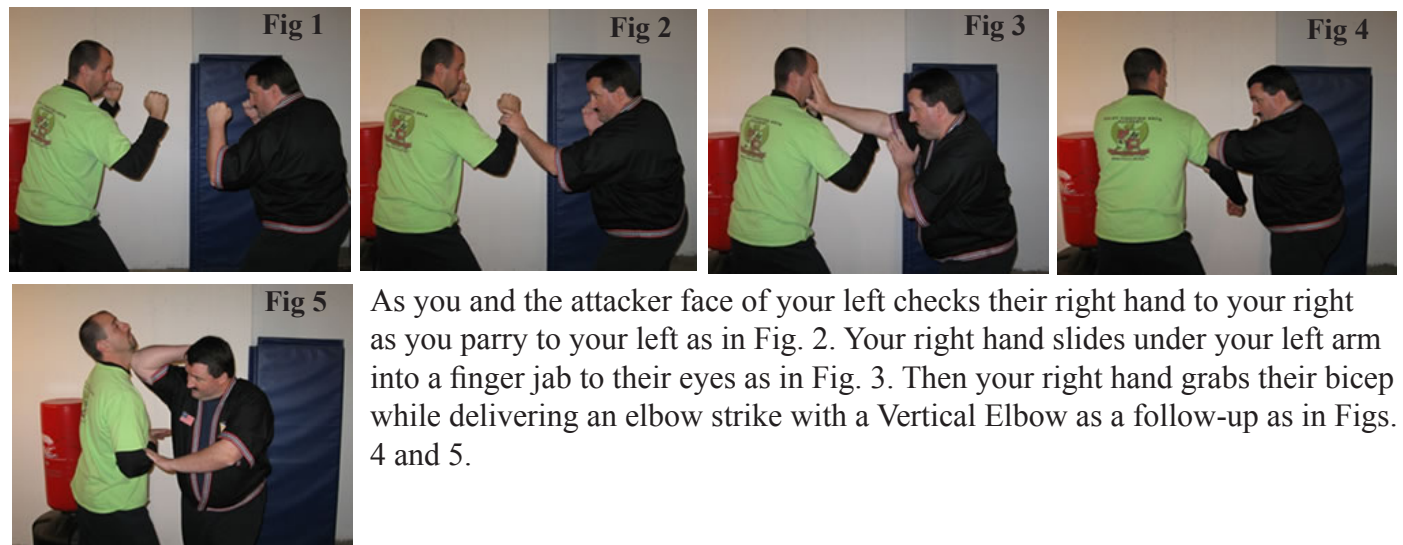
Fig 1

### Defensive Gunting # 3:

As the attacker gives a right punch “do a safety check” with your left hand as you outside parry their attack as in Fig. 1. Use your right hand to finger jab the attacker’s eyes, and then grab his bicep as in Fig. 2. Deliver an elbow strike to their bicep as in Fig. 3. Finally, deliver a Vertical Elbow to their jaw as in Fig. 4.



### Offensive Gunting # 3:



As you and the attacker face of your left checks their right hand to your right as you parry to your left as in Fig. 2. Your right hand slides under your left arm into a finger jab to their eyes as in Fig. 3. Then your right hand grabs their bicep while delivering an elbow strike with a Vertical Elbow as a follow-up as in Figs. 4 and 5.

### Offensive Destruction Combination # 1



bicep as in Fig. 2. Finally, I follow up by trapping his hand downward as I do a back fist as in Fig. 3.

I open my attack with a strike to Guru Baharu Wayne's left hand, which hits him in the face as in Fig. 1. Then, my left hand checks Guru Baharu Wayne's right hand as I deliver a Gunting Strike to the inside of his

### Offensive Destruction Combination # 2

In combination No. 2, Guru Baharu Wayne could be facing off with me, or attempting to strike me with his right hand. This doesn't matter because at the Malay Fighting Arts Academy we practice the defensive techniques, the offensive techniques, and combining both for a well-rounded system. Let's say Guru Baharu Wayne did a right jab at me. I counter his strike with a Back-Fist Gunting as in Fig. 1. I then go right





into another Back-Fist Gunting to his other arm with a strike to his jaw as a follow up as in Figs. 2 and 3.

With these basic techniques, and some practice I hope I have added to your knowledge in “Defanging the Snake” for offensive use. The main purpose in write the articles I write, and producing my DVDs is to share my knowledge of the arts that I love with everyone that will listen. Thank you for taking the time to read my article, and please feel free to e-mail me with any questions. I hope God watches over you and your family.

**Guru James Hogue:** The author has been training in the Southeast Asian Martial Arts for over 34 years, and has served in law-enforcement for over 21 years. He has dedicated this article to his new granddaughter, Grace.

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# 5 Things to Consider Before Buying a Self Defense Knife

By Joel Huncar

Knives and knife fighting have seen a huge upswing in popularity these days. Something that was once taught in small secretive groups is now being taught at your local YMCA by karate, Jiu Jitsu and other “traditional” martial arts instructors. Many people are carrying “defensive” knives for self protection, from all sorts of social backgrounds. The art of the blade is not just in the hands of street punks and paramilitary types any more. Now it is not uncommon to meet homemakers, realtors, stock brokers and bankers all carrying knives as part of their personal protection strategy. Many of these people have excellent instruction and are ready for the world of martial blade carry but many have had very little training and are just ignorantly following the latest trend. For those who wish to make an informed decision about buying and carrying a knife for self protection there are some things that you should consider.

## 1) Are You Prepared?

Do you have the mental, physical and emotional training to be able to carry a blade for self defence? Remember we are talking about using a sharp instrument to cut up another human being here. This is a very ugly and brutal way to fight. Are you ready to suffer the consequences of doing potentially lethal damage to another person? Are you trained well enough to keep your blade in your hands instead of your attackers? Do you have enough control of your temper to know you will

not use your weapon where it is not appropriate? Are you willing to take someone’s life to protect your own?

If your answer is no to any of these questions, then please do not make the knife a part of your defensive strategy. The sober truth about bladed weapons is that they maim and kill. While many knife teachers say that you can use a knife to disable an attacker, this is not really very realistic in the high speed adrenaline charged reality of violence. Overkill is instinctive once adrenaline kicks in, so if you carry a blade you must be sure that your life is in danger before you pull it or you may find yourself spending a long time reflecting on your actions behind bars. Knives can be great life saving tools but only for the most extreme circumstances.

## 2) Knife Quality:

The thing I recommend to my students is that when they are picking out a knife they get one made by one of well known manufacturers. Cold Steel, SOG, Spyderco, CRKT, Benchmade, Timberline, Buck, and Camillus are some of the top manufacturers of production knives. All of them make very good folding and fix blade knives that are reasonably priced and have great warranties. Price range for these knives should be from twenty five dollars on the low end up to a couple of hundred dollars on the high end. An average decent quality folder should be around fifty to one hundred fifty dollars. CRKT make some excellent low cost folders but for myself I prefer Cold Steel.

If you want you could buy custom made knives from a famous knife maker, but these knives will perform just as well in a violent encounter and they won’t break your bank. Custom made are great if you can afford them, but for me I simply do not have the money for a custom knife.

Cheap knock offs on the other hand should be avoided like the plague. They are usually poor quality and will break under any hard use. Remember you will use your defensive knife as a tool first and for personal protection second and this should be your first consideration when you pick it out. Stay away from low quality stuff that can be found at flea markets and gas stations.

Also one thing I have found is that quite often knives that are marketed with gun manufacturer’s names are often of poor quality. Let the gun makers make guns and leave the knives to the knife makers. Quite often if you get a blade from one of the big knife manufacturers you will have a companion that with proper upkeep will serve you all your days.

## 3) Model Name:

Try to stay away from knives with macho names or named after famous “knife fighters”. A lawyer will tear you apart in court if you used a knife called the “marauder” to defend yourself. You will look like a psycho to the jury and court. Do not buy a knife that will make you look bad in court. Look for something with a harmless sounding name like the “voyager” or “cricket” or “civilian” to just name a few. Any name

that makes your knife sound tactical, military or martial should be avoided because if you every need to use your blade you will probably have your actions judged in court.

#### 4) Deployment:

Your knife should be able to be brought into use quickly and efficiently. It should be there when you need it, not sitting in the bottom of a purse or a pocket. If it is a folding knife it is imperative it can be opened with one hand quickly. If it is a fixed blade it should be in a sheath that allows for a quick draw.

If you can't access your knife swiftly it will be of little use in an assault. The other side of this you will need to practice getting your knife out quick while under pressure. You need to drill your draw. It is not enough to have a blade at your side but you must be practiced at getting it out in an emergency situation.

There is yet another important factor to deployment, if it is easy for you to draw your knife, it will be easy for an opponent to get to it if you are grappling or clinching. This means you need to train at protecting your knife while in combat. Many self defence situations can happen so quick that you will be unable to access your knife. Or your knife may not be appropriate to the situation, but once the fight is on your opponent may go for your knife and escalate the situation. You need to know how to keep your knife in your own hands and not your opponents. Knife retention is often overlooked by many knife practitioners and trainers but is very important to your survival when it comes to self defence knife training.

#### 5) Blade Style and Length:

The type of blade you carry should suit both your life style and self defence needs. You should pick a knife that suits your personal fighting style, the environment in which you live and your profession. A roughneck in northern Alberta would need a different knife then a personal assistant working in a posh office in downtown LA. Also I train in a slashing intensive system of arnis where as a person who trains in a thrusting intensive system will be suited to a different blade then me. Tailor your blade choice to your environment, training and life style.

Another side to this is that you should know the local laws and bylaws concerning knives. You do not want to defend yourself with a weapon that is prohibited in your area. This is very important. You want to look like a reasonable person to the police and court, not some outlaw who packs dangerous weapons and looks for trouble. When it comes to court image is very important, if you are packing a prohibited weapon you have taken the first step in destroying your own credibility.

When it comes to picking out a defensive blade you should keep these things in mind. Pick a knife that suits you, your training style and your life style. Understand what you are getting into when it comes to using a knife for self defence. It is your responsibility to make good choices when it comes to knives and weapons in general. Do not make knives your only choice of defensive training. A knife is only a viable choice for a severely limited amount of self defence scenarios. You should depend on your empty hand skills

as well and save deadly weapons for situations where using deadly force is a reasonable option. By this I mean situations where your life is in jeopardy, anything else is morally and legally wrong.

There is a lot to consider before one starts to carry a knife for self defence. The more reflection and research you put into buying the knife that is right for you will not only keep you from wasting your money but could also save you from making a choice that will change your life forever.



**Guro Joel Huncar**

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# The Main Role of Senior Students

Amara Arkanis - USA

By: Phillip Weathers

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There are many roles filled by senior students in a martial arts group of any kind. The newest senior students are in a position analogous to that of a college student the day after graduation or a non-commissioned military officer the day after his initial promotion. Both have achieved a big goal and moved to a different level but neither has really learned to do his job yet. Along with one kind of new status comes a way of being at the bottom of a new heap.

This article attempts to track a developmental process for seniors by looking at the roles they fill. It is intentionally short and directed as much at new senior students as their teachers. No doubt there will be expansions on subjects glossed over here.

Senior students are never in charge of the overall teaching or experience of a group. As a subgroup within a school, they work to support the goals of the school. Although there are many ways to do this, the essential thread uniting senior students across history and differences in styles is the job of modeling the style and its desired behaviors to more junior students. If the seniors show through their conduct that the school embodies desirable skills and behavior, junior students will be moved to emulate them. This is not a result of command authority, but of choice by the junior students.

The Japanese might use the word “giri” (admiration, love, responsibility) for this process by

which authority is gained through freely given choice.

An English word for the same process is “modeling.” The juniors model their behavior after seniors (including the head teacher). The seniors provide the model. Providing the model is also called “modeling” in a specialized use of the word by educators and behavioral scientists.

Modeling is usually unintentional. Nobody has the energy to be a conscious role model all day every day. Self discipline helps to control what we model to others. Senior students must have some level of discipline and understanding to fill their roles.

In this process of emulation through choice, the practices and skills espoused by the school are passed on to new students. This makes it possible for the school to survive and prosper. In much the same way as armies cannot survive without a solid core of non-commissioned officers, martial arts schools need a healthy, cooperating core of senior students.

Modeling the practices and behaviors espoused by the school is the most important role of any senior student. Please note that it is at least possible for this process to occur with no giving of orders or overt exercise of authority. While seniors may need to and should exercise authority when required, their success is measured in part by how little they need to give orders or exercise authority to

extinguish poor behavior.

This brief discussion of modeling demonstrates that senior students do their most important work in the workout area in the presence of junior students. The senior students are judged in part by the success of juniors in their school. A small school with only a few long-term students is not likely to survive unless it can present a model to attract new students. This means the long-term students demonstrate some martial virtues.


Many “non-modeling” jobs filled by senior students are nonetheless explicable in terms of helping the school attract new students to the workout area, which is the center of modeling. Demonstrations, tournaments, video production, web pages, finance, advertising, and recruiting all have some function in keeping the school going and growing. One could argue with perfect justice that this article assumes the primacy of the workout floor as the center of any martial arts group. This is the place where desirable physical skills and character attributes are learned. Most other activities collapse in the absence of regular workouts.

Typically junior students clean the school and tend to other physical concerns that have to be done ever and over. Seniors are

chosen in part for their ability to model, and because they can be trusted. Their first need is to learn about passing on the values of the school. Then they must do it. This work can be augmented by simple mechanical tasks that still require trust like filing in the office or collecting dues.

Seniors may assist individual students and play an assistive role to the teacher. More advanced seniors may lead warm-ups or even classes in the presence of the teacher. Seniors who have successfully lead classes several times in the absence of a teacher may have the potential to represent the school in public (demos, tournaments, sales, etc.). Some jobs involving new technology have to be assigned based simply on who can do them. Teachers need to be current on the set of abilities collectively possessed by their seniors.

The further a senior's job or role is from the workout floor, the more it has to do with some aspect of business management and the less it has to do with martial arts. Still such jobs are entirely necessary. No job that supports the school is completely divorced from the martial arts.



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# Reflection of December 11, 2009

By Grandmaster Frank Aycocho

S. No. 3288  
H. No. 6516

Republic of the Philippines  
**Congress of the Philippines**

*Metro Manila*

*Fourteenth Congress*

*Third Regular Session*

Began and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-seventh day of July, two thousand nine.

[ REPUBLIC ACT No. 9850 ]

AN ACT DECLARING ARNIS AS THE NATIONAL MARTIAL ART AND SPORT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to inculcate patriotism, nationalism and appreciation of the role of national heroes and symbols in the historical development of the country. Furthermore, the State must give priority to education, science and technology, arts and culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.

SEC. 2. Definition of *Arnis*. - *Arnis*, also known as *Eskrima*, *Kali*, *Garrote* and other names in various regional languages, such as *Panandata* in Tagalog; *Pagkalikol*, *Ibanag*; *Kabaroan* and *Kalirongan*, *Pangasinan*; *Kaliradman*, *Diaya*; and *Da'ya*, *Ilokano*, is an indigenous Filipino martial

2

art and sport characterized by the use of swinging and twirling movements, accompanied by striking, thrusting and parrying techniques for defense and offense. This is usually done with the use of one (1) or two (2) sticks or any similar implements or with bare hands and feet also used for striking, blocking, locking and grappling, with the use of the same principle as that with the canes.


SEC. 3. *Arnis* is hereby declared as the Philippine National Martial Art and Sport. The official adoption of *arnis* as the national martial art and sport shall be promulgated by inscribing the symbol of *arnis* in the official seal of the Philippine Sports Commission and by making it as the first sport competition to be played by participating teams on the first day in the annual *Palarong Pambansa*. The Philippine Sports Commission shall be the lead agency to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. The Department of Education, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Philippine Sports Commission shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. Any provision of law, decree, executive order, rule or regulation in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions and/or purposes of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

  
PROSPERO C. NOGRALES  
Speaker of the House  
of Representatives

  
JUAN PONCE ENRILE  
President of the Senate

This Act which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 3288 and House Bill No. 6516 was finally passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on October 14, 2009.

For:  
MARILYN B. BARRUA-YAP  
Secretary General  
House of Representatives

  
EMMA LIRIO-REYES  
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: DEC 11 2009

  
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO  
President of the Philippines



craft, it bothers me that I even felt like a tiny mice calling me a 3rd World country guy. I felt so mad when one huge weight lifter said I am too small, he would break my bones if he hit me. I fought and hit the sternum of the guy with a lunge punch and knocked him down. The man couldn't believe that a 5'6" Filipino martial arts Master could knock him down with one single punch. Later on he signed up for training and became one of my regular students.

With the assistance of Grandmasters and University Professors, I was able to register my Organization at the DTI and SEC., "The AMAC- Ayocho Martial Arts Center and the KKAASI-Kuntaw Kali Arnis Ayocho System Incorporated," and also became affiliated with the PCK-EAM (Philippines Council of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters) Founded by Grandmaster Roland Dantes,

At the PLM-ICPE-SAP (Pamantasan Lungsod ng Maynila - Integrated College of Physical Education), School of Arnis Professionals, Director, Professor Armando Soteco becomes the Board of Directors of AMAC, on his behalf, AMAC has become the training ground of graduate P.E. Teachers taking up Master degrees and high students as well in MAPEH subject, it's my pleasure in my spare time to give tutorial services to educate people about Arnis sports and for self defense. Arnis has been a selective subject in physical education in high schools and in colleges but this year 2009, the USEC. Of Department of Education has committed to Senator Migz Zubiri and to all the Grandmasters at the Congress Arnis Convention of promises in C. C. C., (Commitment - Courage

- Challenge), The USEC has traveled to 101 countries representing the high quality level of education in the Philippines and has proven excellent work and leadership for the Filipino people.

The long wait is over for Arnis, the traditional Filipino martial arts, has become the national sport. And it took a Senator and Arnis experts as well, to give the sport, around the world, the recognitions it deserves.

"We've done it. Now we have the law" said Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri who, along with Representative Henry Teves and George Arnais, authored the law making Arnis the country's national martial arts and sport. Republic Act 9850 was signed by President Arroyo on December 11, 2009, a move that was welcomed by Senator Zubiri and the countless Arnis practitioners throughout the country.

Senator Zubiri, was the National Champion in his weight class in 1988. He's been a practitioner of Arnis since he was 16

years old and now, as a 40 years old senator, he just couldn't stop in his desire in helping in the development of Arnis sports.

It's quite ironic that Arnis, our traditional martial arts, is being practiced more in other countries than inside ours. The special-forces in the United States, Russia, Israel and Germany used them and recognize them as Filipino martial arts.

Senator Zubiri spoke in front of the Arnis Grandmasters from different styles, clubs, and organizations from across the country as they paid a courtesy call on Philippine Sports Commission Chairman Harry Angpin.

Senator Zubiri and PSC Chairman Harry Angpin with Grandmasters

It didn't take long for the PSC chief to throw his full support into Arnis through a 5 million pesos pledge, and an office space for Arnis training at the PSC Building. "It's about time for Arnis to get the recognition it truly deserves, and the PSC, being the lead gov-



Senator Zubiri and PSC Chairman Harry Angpin with Grandmasters

ernment agency in sports, will always be here to help, “ Said Angpin, who presented Senator Zubiri with an RP Team jacket.

“In Thailand they have Muay Thai Boxing, in Korea they have Tae Kwon-Do and in Indonesia they have Pencak Silat, now the Philippines has Arnis as our national sport and it’s here to stay.

**Present at the press conference, PSC, were Grandmasters:**

Grandmaster Rene Tongson, Professor Armando Soteco, Grandmaster Rey Dela Cruz, Grandmaster Frank Aycocho, Grandmaster Vic Sanches, Grandmaster Bert Lamaniego, Grandmaster Jerson Tortal Jr. Grandmaster Pepito Robas, Grandmaster Rodel Dagooc, Grandmaster Limuel Maning Bansa, Lady Grandmaster (daughter of the late Grandmaster Lema), Ms. Caballero, Grandmaster Samuel Dulay. Masters of Arnis from different styles, Master Vher Tubera, Master Rey Dominguez, Master Jerry Evangelisan, Dayang Cecil Tubera, Professor Josie Bauzon, R. Delos Santos and many more whom I meet for the first time because I’ve spent a long time overseas.

There has been a lot of Arnis Grandmasters outside the Philippines teaching overseas and are noted to be some of the finest Filipino martial arts instructors , in fact Westerns and Europeans have become more skillful in the art with the influence of different style such as WEKAFP, IMAFP, KKAASI, LESKAS, PCK-EAM DAV, DTS, etc... to name a few.



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By Marc Lawrence

What makes up the basics of Filipino martial arts known as Eskrima, Arnis or Kali? This is a complete fighting art with the primary focus being on the weapons and the defense against them. The basics are made up of simple mechanical principles, good body mechanics and the economy of motion. In order to be a good Filipino martial arts fighter, a student must have good basics. This is a fact as with a good foundation a house is strong so is a fighter with a good foundation.

The fighting system was originally used to train fellow villagers in a short period of time for combat against other island villages and foreign invaders. The typical time available between rainy time was just a matter months. There was no time or reason to teach flashy techniques or train only those with special abilities. The people had to become proficient quickly or perish in battle.

The traditional arts are known as Kali, Eskrima or Arnis, stick, knife and hand to hand fighting which was developed over a period of many centuries in the Philippines as her people fought for their independence from foreign invaders. Each skirmish with a new culture added to the Filipino martial arts as the warriors

developed techniques to combat foreign styles. Subsequently, more than 100 different Filipino martial arts styles developed, which can be grouped into three complete self-defense systems which utilize sticks, swords, and empty hands.

It is the original mixed martial art that was based upon simple, non-flashy battle tested methods of fighting. They were designed to use natural efficient motions and exploited the weaknesses of their opponent's body. A complete Filipino martial arts system being taught to students contained certain basic things. First you learn to use a rattan stick, it is known as the poor man's weapon and punching bag. The real purpose of the stick is used to teach your body how to move for attacking, defending, counter attacking, grappling and throwing. The next step is when you learn to use and defend against blades, like a bolo or knife, and then last but not least you learn to use your hands and feet like the stick and the knife. Within a complete system you will find it has hand to hand, hand and foot fighting as well as wrestling methods.

Some styles are very complex like Modern Arnis and Doce Pares as they teach multiple weapons and methods as they

are made from multiple systems, others are as simple like Cinco Terros as just with one weapon, a single stick only with no training on the use of blade or empty hands methods. Some families still have fighting systems that have no name but are still just as effective as well known ones. Some martial art academies offer stick fighting training to supplement their core art like Karate, Kung Fu, or Taekwondo. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. Some systems just do drills, some spar with padded sticks only, others spar with rattan sticks and safety gear, others spar with just a helmet and live stick, and some just use gloves.

The Filipino fighting arts are just as good today as they were in the past. This is because the Filipino martial arts are built on battling a variety of foreign invaders. It works amazingly well against any style of martial art today. The United States Army included portions of the Filipino martial arts in its training manual for soldiers.

Today in the USA there are local, regional, national and world tournaments with Filipino martial arts competition. These tournaments are the way many clubs test their skills. In the greater Los Angeles area there are roughly 25 groups or clubs that teach the Filipino martial arts. There are Filipino, Filipino-Hawaiian, Fil-Am and American teachers that share their love for the Filipino martial arts. A fair number of the American teachers in the Filipino martial arts are married to Filipinas and share the art and culture with their children and students.

This column does not take the place of training with a Guro, Master, or a Grandmaster but is to hopefully supplement the training

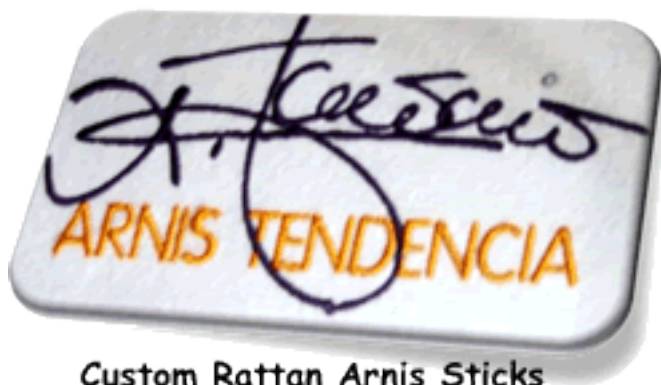


as this fighting art is one that needs to be learned by hands-on practicing. In the old days, a Guro would spoon feed you a little information at time, so that you could digest and remember it. Get with your teacher if you can, practice with others if you do not have a regular teacher. Practice every day you can and play with everyone you can and you will grow. Each body is different so just because you cannot do the technique just like another guy's does not make it wrong. Filipino martial arts, is about finding your own way! Put together your own tool box of good techniques. Have anyone teaching you explain the concepts behind their method or combination.

Until next time,

**Questions or Comments:** [mjlawrence@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mjlawrence@sbcglobal.net)

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These two truths started with Supreme Master Sam Tendencia in 1927 when he first started his training with the Late Great Ramondo Gallano.

We here at ARNIS Tendencia (TM) uphold both of these truths even to this day. Just as the Abecedario is the foundation of our system, so is the sacred rattan stick.

**For more info please contact Maestro Nap at;** (850) 543-9517 or **Email:** [ndg714@live.com](mailto:ndg714@live.com)

# FMA Past Events

## 2nd Pres David B. Tirol Cup

March 6, 2009

UB Bulletin [Website](#)



The University of Bohol, Criminology Department held the 2nd Pres. David B. Tirol Cup on Pit Fighting Competition last March 6, 2009 at the UB gymnasium.

The UB Criminology Pit Fighting Society in association with Bro. Jojo Carcallas and Grandmaster Nelson Vargas with the support of the different martial arts clubs; Red Dragon Mixed Martial Arts of Master Voltaire Gonzales; Aikido Ryu of Master Rolando De La Serna; Lawin Karate Club of Grand Master Winnie Ayag; and Bokaido of Master Dennis Dadap successfully displayed the skills and talents in the art of Kick Boxing

and Mix Martial Arts before the viewing public.

The major sponsors include; Pres. David B. Tirol, Brig. General Danny Lim, Sen. Antonio trillanes, and Sec. Arthur Yap of agriculture, German SAKIBO Federartion. The minor sponsors Dodong Malamis, George Lim, Mr. and Mrs. ruben Raneces, Camp de Fishing, milo, Coke, Allied Bank, Tire Queen, Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Aboyabor, and Aproniana Gift Shop.

The tournament is design to show the dicipline, strategy, and greatness, of the different skills and abilities of martial art students.

To read about other events that happened at the end of 2009.

Download the Mini Issue - 2009 Past Events Wrap-up ([Click Here](#))

Remember if you have an event besides advertising it before hand, let others know what went on, what was taught etc... Send write ups and pictures to: [fmaevent@fmadigest.com](mailto:fmaevent@fmadigest.com)



[www.myfma.net](http://www.myfma.net)

**MyFMA.net** - The best source of Filipino Martial Arts information on the internet featuring photos, videos, events, chat, blogs, and forums!

**MyFMA.net** seeks to bring together Filipino Martial Arts practitioners from around the world in a thriving online community.

This network of mutual respect and camaraderie is open to everyone that wishes to share their love and passion for the Filipino Martial Arts.

Sincerely,  
**John R. Malmo**

MyFMA.net is a social network created to help propagate the Filipino martial arts, and encourage Filipino martial arts practitioners to share their passion with each other. Everyone is welcome regardless of their background or style. This network environment allows the open exchanging of ideas and the opportunity to establish social relationships.

Since its launch in April of 2009, MyFMA.net has steadily increased in size to include nearly 1,000 members. This includes numerous recognized Grandmasters, Masters, and Founders - as well as individuals new to the Filipino martial arts.

Every member has a customizable profile page and is able to post photos, videos, events, and blogs related to the Filipino martial arts. They can add friends and comment directly to each other's walls. Members may also join in live

chat, video chat, discussions, and become members of groups that share backgrounds.

These groups represent separate styles or associations and allow students of the same Filipino martial arts system to share ideas, videos, discussions, and schedule events in their own dedicated area. There are currently 80 groups on MyFMA.net representing dozens of styles. Each group has numerous discussions, blogs, and events.

MyFMA.net currently has approximately 115 blogs, 75 discussion topics, and 115 events posted that are public to everyone. Current topics include: the history of Filipino martial arts, the evolution of terminology, training drills, and personal reasons for training in particular styles. Additionally, there are over 3,700 photos and nearly 500 videos related to the Filipino martial arts. This is the largest collection of Filipino martial arts videos outside of YouTube, and a number of these videos are exclusive to MyFMA.net.

Some of the other features include chat, video chat, and social network integration. Members may participate in a live, real-time network-wide chat room as well as private chats with other members. They may also utilize an elaborate video chat that integrates media sharing options. Additionally, MyFMA.net can be integrated with social networks like Facebook and Twitter. It is also has an iPhone interface at: [www.myfma.net/m](http://www.myfma.net/m)

Like any network, MyFMA.net is only as strong as its members. Because of our members, we proudly state that we are the best source of Filipino Martial Arts information on the internet. Since a number of our members are recognized Grandmasters, if you have a question, you can turn directly to the source. You can contact a member directly, utilize chat, post a discussion, or create a blog. Our current member base is extremely knowledgeable and happy to answer questions, provide insights, and help anyone interested in the Filipino martial arts.

We hope everyone with a passion for the Filipino martial arts, and those just interested in learning more about the Filipino martial arts will join us. Together we will promote Filipino martial arts while helping to educate and serve as a resource for the current and new generations of Filipino martial arts enthusiasts.

# FMA Future Events



## 2010

### February

#### **Martial Arts Winter Camp**

February 5 - 6, 2010  
1569 Olivina Ave. Suite 105  
Livermore, CA

#### **Email**

#### **Mardis Gras Martial Arts Camp 2010**

February 12-17, 2010  
Fountainbleau State Park  
67825 Highway 190  
Mandeville, Louisiana  
Seminar - Tournament

#### **Email**

#### **Website**

#### **Legacy Tournament**

February 20 - 21, 2010  
The Hilton in Stockton  
2323 Grand Canal Blvd  
Stockton, CA.

#### **Flyer**

#### **Email**

#### **Website**

#### **SEAMOK Tactical Solutions**

Level 1 Certificate Course  
February 20 - 21 2010  
Excell Martial Arts  
722 W. 19th Street  
Houston, Texas, 77008

**Contact:** SiSok Dan Barretto (832) 875-0706

#### **Flyer**

#### **Email**

### March

#### **SEAMOK Level #1 Certification Course**

March 20 - 21 2010  
Alliance Martial Arts Academy  
702-B Mission Trace Dr.  
Kingsland, Georgia

#### **Flyer**

#### **Email**

#### **Website**

#### **IKAEF Bali Camp**

March 22-28, 2009  
Bali  
Nusa Dua, Indonesia

#### **Email**

#### **Website**

### April

#### **Open Grandmaster Cup Martial Arts Tournament**

April 24-25, 2010  
Almendraz  
Davao City, Philippines  
(082) 271-6148 or (0910) 378-5828

#### **Email / Email**

### May

#### **Modern Arnis Seminar**

Dr Remy P. Presas  
May 15 - 16, 2010  
3 Adrianeiou St.  
Metamorfofi, Athens, Greece

#### **Email**

#### **Website**

### **World Trade Center Mexico**

Filipino Martial Arts Championship

May 22, 2010

Av. Filadelfia s/n Col. Napoles

C.P. Mexico D.E.

**Flyer**

**Email**

**Website / Website**

### **June**

#### **Disneyland Martial Arts Festival**

June 19 - 20, 2010

Anaheim Convention Center

800 West Katella Ave.

Anaheim, CA.

**Flyer**

**Website**

FMA Contact Information

Coordinator: Darren Tibon

(209) 464-3701

**Email**

**Website**

### **July**

#### **Way of the Knife**

July 8-12, 2010

Northshore Academy

281 Peterson Rd

Libertyville, IL

**Email**

**Website**

#### **Grandmaster Richard Bustillo Seminar**

July 10 - 11, 2010

307 White Horse Pike

Absecon, New Jersey

**Email**

**Website**

#### **WEKAF**

11th World Eskrima Kali Arnis Championship

July 19 - 25, 2010

Puerto Vallarta

Jalisco, México

**Email**

**Website**

### **5th Filipino Martial Arts Festival**

July 25 to 30, 2010

Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island, Philippines

**Flyer**

**Email**

**Website / Website**

### **WMAA 10 year Anniversary Celebration & Training Camp**

**July 30th - August 1, 2010**

WMAA Headquarters

(Horizon Martial Arts)

280 Center Rd.

West Seneca [Buffalo], NY.

(716) 771-1291

**Flyer**

**Email**

**Website**

**Stickman Escrima Products**



**Hi-Impact Sticks and Blades**

[www.stickman-escrima.com](http://www.stickman-escrima.com)

The Original Hi-Impact Sticks, Staffs and Training Knives

~ Since 1986 ~

Designed by a martial artist for martial artists



[www.FMAPulse.com](http://www.FMAPulse.com)

**FMAPulse.com** is an exciting new website dedicated to the Filipino martial arts. It is the mission of the FMA Pulse to help promote, educate and serve as a resource for the current and new generation of FMA enthusiasts.

The team at FMAPulse.com is presenting Filipino martial arts to the world via the internet using Web 2.0 technology. Users can interact with one another in a setting much like Myspace or Facebook, only that we are focused primarily on the Filipino martial arts. This on-line community will give users around the world the ability to share, learn, teach and stay current with what's going on in the world of the Filipino martial arts.

Not only will this online social network cater to practicing Filipino martial arts students and instructors, but also to anyone interested in learning about the Filipino martial arts and culture. Aside from connecting people together, FMAPulse.com will be offering viewers their own personal blog, articles, upcoming Filipino martial arts events and monthly video or audio pod-casts of different Filipino martial arts instructors and their respective styles. This will give viewers a chance to get to know these leading Filipino martial arts instructors and their styles on a more in-depth level.

We at FMAPulse.com invite you to participate, share your views and ideas so we can all unite to help further promote the Filipino martial arts in a positive way across the globe.

Sincerely,  
**The FMA Pulse Team**

A little more than a year ago Filipino martial arts practitioners Michael Querubin and Romeo Maguigad tossed around some ideas for an Filipino martial arts website. One idea was to create an on-line presence with a mission to help promote, educate, propagate and elevate the Filipino martial arts and culture. It saddens us that many Fil-Ams do not even know that the Philippines has a martial art! Another was to provide interviews of Filipino martial arts teachers using audio or video mediums so the Filipino martial arts community could see or hear these Filipino martial arts instructors and get to know them on a more personal level. Hence, FMA Pulse was born.

FMA Pulse from its inception brought together varying aspects of different Filipino martial arts websites and housed them under one roof. From the beginning we wanted to serve as a resource site to newcomers to Filipino martial arts. It was also essential to have a social networking component, a forum to discuss the latest happenings, and an e-commerce store to provide high quality training equipment. It is our intention with these services to help build a vibrant online community centered on promoting and elevating Filipino martial arts to a standard that has not been seen before!

As with any good website, we continually strive to improve and expand our website to better serve the Filipino martial arts community. As of January 1st we are now offering online streaming Filipino martial arts video lessons. These lessons were designed for the person who is new to Filipino martial arts but is not geographically close to a credible instructor. They also serve as an introduction to Filipino martial arts for martial artists who come from different backgrounds.

We invite you to come check out our featured instructor interviews and our soon to be released "FMA technique of the week". We are also offering free ground shipping on product orders over \$75.00 dollars in the U.S.

We would also like to send a special thanks to FMA Digest for blazing the trail for newcomers like us and being our biggest supporter. Also thank you to all the Guros, Masters and Grandmasters for your contributions to Filipino martial arts

and FMA Pulse. There is no better time than now for everyone to do their part to help elevate Filipino martial arts!

## Past Featured Practitioners that were Interviewed



### May 2009: Gat Puno Abon Baet

#### Garimot Arnis System

We had the great pleasure to have attended Gat Puno Abon Baet's Garimot Arnis and Harimaw Buno seminar during his visit to Chicago. When first meeting Gat Puno Baet, there was an immediate feeling of comfort being around him, like we've known each other for a long time.

Learn more and listen to his interview...

[Click Here](#)



### June 2009: Maha Guro Nate Defensor

#### Defensor Method FMA

Maha Guro Defensor has been teaching his Defensor Method in the Chicagoland area for almost 30 years and has trained and studied with notable Filipino martial arts figures such as Floro Villabrille, Leo Gaje, Mike Inay, Angel Cables, Raymund Tobosa, Dan Inosanto and Jimmy Tacosa to name a few.

Learn more and listen to his interview...

[Click Here](#)



### July 2009: Guro Fred Evrard

#### Kali Majapahit

Guro Fred Evrard on his system, traditional Filipino Martial Art weapons, training with Punong Guro Jeff Espinous of Kali Sikaran and Suro Mike Inay of Inayan Eskrima. Also hear Guro Evrard tell his story on how he presented Kali Majapahit to the Fullcom Council of Martial Arts Masters of Baguio and the National Council of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters in Manila as well as training the Philippine Special Forces and the Philippine National Police.

Learn more and listen to his interview...

[Click Here](#)



### August 2009: Punong Guro Myrlino Hufana

#### Hufana Traditional Arnis International and the WFMAA Expo & Laban Laro

Hufana Traditional Arnis International. Punong Guro Hufana is also the Founder and President of the World Filipino Martial Arts Association which will be holding its 7th Expo and Laban Laro on October 23 - 25 in Las Vegas, Nevada. We encourage Filipino martial arts practitioners to attend this event which will be featuring some of the best Filipino martial arts instructors in the world!

Learn more and listen to his interview...

[Click Here](#)



### September 2009: Dr. Remy Presas, Jr.

#### Modern Arnis

Dr. Presas, with the help of his siblings, established MARPPPIO (Modern Arnis Remy P. Presas International Organization) to continue the legacy left by his father.

Learn more and listen to his interview... [Click Here](#)

## Weapons Review: The “Hataw Stick” from Simon at [www.eskrimakaliarnis.com](http://www.eskrimakaliarnis.com)

Reviewed by Michael Butz

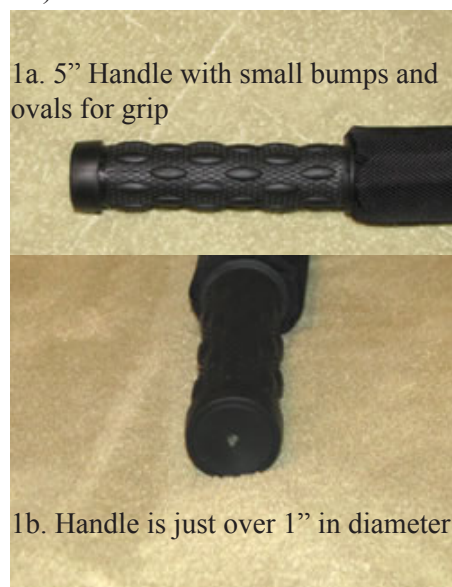


On November 15, 2009, I hosted a gathering in Phoenix, AZ, known as the “AZ FMA Friendship Gathering”. There was supposed to be a sparring session at the end of the event but I cancelled it due to a somewhat low number of interested participants. Simon, the owner and operator of [www.eskrimakaliarnis.com](http://www.eskrimakaliarnis.com) and eBay store “Sticks and Buddhas” had supplied some padded sticks, his “Hataw” line, for the sparring session. Since we did not spar during the Gathering, a friend of mine and I spent three hours after the event testing out the performance and durability of the sticks. Although I am not much of a writer and I have never reviewed any product before, I thought I would give my opinion on Simon’s Hataw sticks.

From what I can tell, the “Hataw” sticks are an improvement over his original padded sticks. Both versions have a padded tumalin rattan core covered with a tough, canvas-like lining. I think the improvements are in the stitching of the lining and the addition of a handle on the “Hataw” version. The original padded sticks are available in red and blue. At the time of this writing, the “Hataw” sticks are available in black only but I believe Simon is currently working with suppliers to make them available in red and blue as well. I am sure there are those who would like to have at

least some kind of choice; however, the availability of different colors is not relevant to me, as I prefer the black color.

The sticks are 28” (71cm) in overall length and just over 1 ½” in diameter. The handle is 5” long, just over 1” in diameter and is made of a hard rubber with small bumps and larger oval bumps to aid with grip (See 1a & 1b). Simon can make the sticks in



different lengths for custom orders so those who prefer something a little longer or shorter have that option. The handle is long enough to accommodate most hand sizes but some practitioners may find it to be too short, as it does not allow for a punyo. I do not think the handle material is soft enough for allow for safe punyo hits without additional protection. This is a minor detail and not a “deal breaker” for me at all.

One of my first concerns was that the sticks, at slightly over 7 oz (200 g) each, are a little on the light side. However, I have been using Bahi sticks (also from Simon) during practice and swinging a steel bar for solo drills for the past couple of years so that may be an affecting factor. What I found during training is that the weight is actually ideal. New and younger practitioners can swing fully and still keep good form while advanced individuals are free to go all out without too much fear of injury. We actually used no protective gear at all during our session and experienced no problems.

Another concern I had during training was the strength of the stitching and overall construction (See 2a-2c).



We were swinging the sticks hard, not just against each other but also against plain rattan and an oak training sword. One spot that I was worried with the most was the area where the handle and the canvas lining attach. I found myself stop-

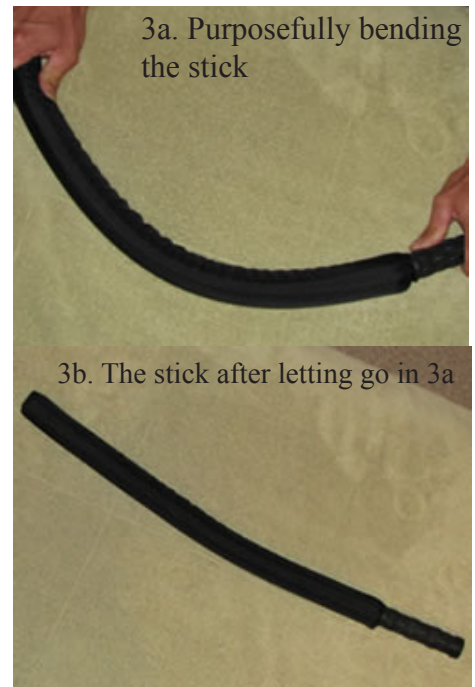


ping frequently during training, almost every 10 minutes, to check for tears or broken stitches. To my surprise, I found nothing. In all honesty, we were not trying to find the breaking point for the sticks. We were using them as we would in regular training and the sticks held up well.

Before receiving these sticks, I had read about how they have the tendency to bend before they will break and even watched a video that tested them. I already know that flexible sticks tend to last longer than those that are rigid. Still, I was skeptical about the design and wondered how often I would have to stop practice and straighten the stick. Turns out that this was not much of a problem at all, we ended up stopping and straightening only three times in the three hours we practiced. Straightening them was easy to do by hand or over a knee or thigh. These sticks can flex, a lot, but they are not “whippy” and do not stay completely bent (See 3a & 3b). The “annoyance” level of having to straighten the sticks was comparable to having to stop practice to wipe the sweat off the hands, which I tend to do without much thought at all, so again, not a “deal breaker”.

In summary, although I had many doubts as to how well these “Hataw” sticks would perform I can honestly say that I like them a lot. The quality of construction, durability and performance were above my original expectations. Factor in that these sticks sell for only \$33.98 a pair (plus shipping) and they are a tremendous value as well. Simon also offers wholesale discounts for bulk and school orders for additional savings or extra income for resellers. I say get a pair and try them yourself. The worst thing that can happen is that you get to beat someone up without the negative effects!

**Michael Butz** is an Arizona-based instructor of the Fierce Tigers Martial Arts Association, headquartered in Salinas CA. He is also the Arizona state representative of the Buffalo Black Brotherhood, based in Stockton, CA. He has been training in the martial arts since 1980. He holds instructor levels in Tang Soo Do, Eskrima and three forms of QiGong and has experience in Wado Ryu Karate, Olympic-style Tae Kwon Do, Shorinji Kempo, Muay Thai, Aikido and Southern Shaolin Tiger/Crane Fist Kung Fu. He currently teaches Kada Anan Eskrima out of his home in Phoenix, AZ and is the weapons curriculum/Eskrima instructor at the Blended Arts Dojo in Surprise, AZ. For more information, go to [www.ftma-az.com](http://www.ftma-az.com).



## Filipino Martial Arts: The Core Basics, Structure & Essentials by Dan Anderson

Book Review By Barry McConnell

Thousands of books have been published on how to punch, kick, block and throw your opponent. In 1981 the release of *American Freestyle Karate: A Guide to Sparring* broke new ground. Here was a book about concepts and principles, not just mechanics. Every serious martial artist I've ever met has a worn, dog-eared copy of this book on his shelf. It was the undisputed best book ever written on the subject of core martial art concepts. Until now.

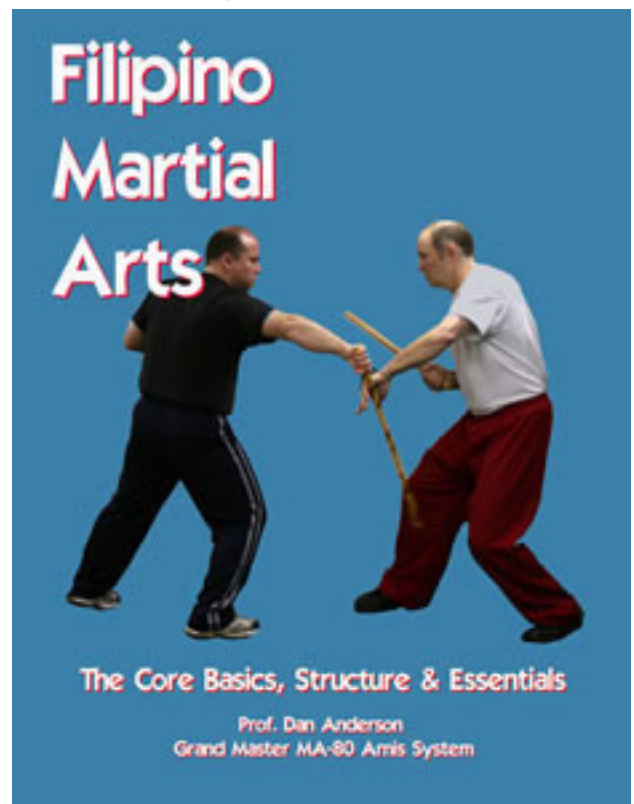
The newly released *Filipino Martial Arts: The Core Basics, Structure & Essentials* addresses the need for a book that explains fundamental ideas in a way that both the beginning student and the experienced teacher can use. Although written for the Filipino martial arts (FMA), this book transcends systems and styles and goes to the heart of what makes martial arts work. A quick glance at some of the topics covered: Monitoring, Structure, Timing, Alignment, Movement, Leveraging, Ambidexterity, and Spontaneity; tells you there's something different going on here. These are not the province of Filipino martial arts alone, these are Universal concepts. These are topics to be studied again and again, gleaning deeper insight every time you do. This book gives you a path to follow.

This is a big book at 328 pages. It contains literally over 2,600 photos demonstrating in detail each concept or idea Dan is trying to get across. If it stopped there, this would still be a tremendous tool. But Dan has included two DVDs with 3 ½ hours of video footage to go along with the book. Every concept you see in the still pictures you also see in live action video. This gives you the best of both worlds; a detailed photograph you can use to compare your own posture to, and the action video to see how a sequence flows. Dan has raised the bar on what to expect from a martial arts book in future.

If you're looking for a book on Filipino martial arts techniques or a training curriculum this is not the book. This book is for the Filipino martial arts practitioner who wants to understand the core principles behind the techniques. For example, in talking about leveraging, Dan shows disarming techniques for each of the 12 standard angles of attack. The particular disarming techniques shown are there to illustrate ways of creating or increasing leverage and act as a platform for understanding where leverage comes from and how to best use it. Certainly, any Filipino martial arts practitioner will improve their disarming ability but this book will not contain an encyclopedia of disarms. Just like an onion, this book opens the reader to layer upon layer of understanding as you explore the concepts and apply them to your own practice. That understanding is what makes this book transcend just Filipino martial arts. The material on structure and alignment will make you a better Karateka, Hapkidoist, Kenpoist or Kung Fu stylist every bit as well as making you a better Arnisador. Professor Presas was well known for describing Modern Arnis as "The Art Within Your Art." What Dan has done is show you exactly what he meant. This book belongs in the critical essentials library of every martial artist.

*Filipino Martial Arts: The Core Basics, Structure & Essentials*  
(Book & DVD set) Price: \$74.95 for the set

**Information on International Ordering, [Click Here](#)**





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