

Filipino Martial Arts

Digest

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

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2010

**Well Known and Remembered Practitioners
Grandmaster Largusa, Master Ricketts,
and Great Grandmaster Ernesto Presas**

**Interview with Adam James
About Training with Leo Fong and FMA in Wei Kuen Do**

**Grandmaster Arthur Gonzalez
and
Decuerdas Escrima**



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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.

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Publishers Desk

Kumusta

The FMA Digest thought to put this extra regular issue out for the end of the year clean up of last articles. First is Grandmaster Art Gonzalez and the Decuerdas - Diestro Fighting System who is one of the most secretive of the major Escrima lineages in Stockton, California and has laid low long enough and is ready to come out and share his knowledge with practitioners.

Adam James the most senior student of Leo Fong discusses with the FMA Digest how it is to train with Leo Fong and how the Filipino martial arts has been intertwined with Leo Fong's art of Wei Kuen Do.

Emmanuel Querubin discusses the types of Arnis de Mano, how this may bring about a strong basic concept to the Filipino Martial Arts Education for all practitioners to benefit in teaching new, present, and updating experienced students.

Marc Lawrence took a trip to Hawaii to search and meet Filipino martial artists, what he has put together are practitioners that answered the call to present a little bit about their art.

The passing of Grandmaster Ben Largusa and Master Christopher Ricketts just days apart from each other at the beginning of October is a great loss to the Filipino martial arts community. Zena Babao talks about some of the past experiences of Grandmaster Ben Largusa and the FMA Digest has taken some of the experiences of Master Christopher Ricketts as told to us. Also to mention it would be good to download Vol7 No1 and read the interview that David Foggie contributed to the FMA Digest, it is very interesting.

Great Grandmaster Ernesto Presas passing away is another great name in the Filipino martial arts and will be missed by many.

There were only a couple past events that were written up and passed along to the FMA Digest. However there were quite a few events that went on in September and October, but no one contributed any information on them.

As you will notice there are no columns in this issue, since it was decided to put this issue out in such a short time. However visit the FMA Pulse (www.FMAPulse.com) and you will find the most up-to-date news and MyFMA.net (www.MyFMA.net) to see what everyone is talking about.

Maraming Salamat Po

Grandmaster Art Gonzalez and the Decuerdas - Diestro Fighting System

By Jeff Finder

Historic Photos Provided By: James Muro

Some people have a commanding presence. When they walk into a room people notice them. Arthur Gonzalez has that kind of effect, moving easily with deliberate purpose. This is no coincidence, for Arthur is the Grandmaster of Decuerdas Escrima and the Decuerdas-Diestro Fighting System, until recently the most secretive of the major Escrima lineages in Stockton, California.

Escrima is deeply embedded in the roots of the Stockton community. Art Gonzalez reminisces about the time as a teenager when he bought a martial art magazine, and to his amazement realized that two of the Masters featured in it worked for his father, who was a farm contractor. Those two men were Angel Cabaes of Serrada, and Gilbert Tenio of Decuerdas, recognized as two of

the most influential manongs to establish and propagate the Filipino martial arts here in America. Cabaes and Tenio had great respect for each other, and in fact Serrada is one of the 18 arts studied by Tenio in creating his Decuerdas system.

While the two styles are considered by some to be “brother arts”, sharing the same numbering system and emphasizing compactness and efficiency of movement, Decuerdas is even more direct than Serrada. This is an art designed to kill quickly, whether one-on-one or against multiple opponents, so situational awareness is important. This is why fast, simple counters are emphasized as one cannot waste time squaring off against one person in such an encounter. The fastest disarm is a strike, allowing one to finish

or move on, and drills are devised to teach positioning within the flow of multiple person attacks. These are practiced under a variety of environmental conditions to better prepare students for possible real-world encounters.

Movements are extremely simple yet devastatingly effective. For example, an outside defense with a stick against a number one strike could be a simple shift offline, accompanied by a single powerful strike downward to immediately kill the



fang and disarm the opponent. Not incidentally, the tip of the defender's stick might end up embedded in the throat of the attacker off of the same move.

One feature of Decuerdas is the way in which they break down timing and rhythm into one, two or three beat drills. A one-beat might be an intercepting punch, where the move is both offensive and defensive at the same time. A two-beat could be a parry and punch combination, while a three-beat will be the familiar Filipino martial arts troika of parry/grab/strike. There is even a zero-beat timing, which simply evades and strike, completely bypassing the opponent's attempted attack.

While outsiders think of Filipino martial arts in terms of the stick, Decuerdas is indeed a complete art. Besides the single stick, it has a strong emphasis on espada y daga. Training also encompasses use of knife, sword, shield, spear and flexible weapons. Empty hand techniques are taught for the street,



Gilbert Tenio and Art Gonzalez

particularly against armed assault, when one may not have a weapon of one's own available. Watching Grandmaster Gonzalez in motion reminds me strongly at times of top Kenpo/Kajukenbo practitioners, then a moment later has me thinking of Silat.

Though the art is designed for deadly encounters, Grandmaster Gonzalez emphasizes the philosophy that having the power to kill allows one the capacity to be compassionate as well. Since every hit targets either muscles, joints or organs, it is just as important to know how to fix the effects of strikes, locks, chokes and throws as how to apply them in the first place, and so Decuerdas is deeply versed in the Filipino healing art of Hilot. Conversely, familiarity with human anatomy through studying healing techniques makes fighting skills that much more dangerous.

Beyond the physical aspects, Decuerdas also takes into account the psychological effects of combat on both the practitioner and opponent. The Grandmaster is strongly aware of the need for mental toughness and clarity. He espouses always training under duress, meaning to learn to maintain composure even while pushing



one's boundaries. Clarity comes from understanding concepts and underlying principles, creating infinite possibilities rather than a finite set of techniques.

Art Gonzalez trained under both Grandmaster Gilbert Tenio and his designated successor John Eliab for 22 years. Arthur describes them as having very different temperaments. Gilbert, he says, was very rough, someone who delighted in demonstrating the effective power of his art. John Eliab, on the other hand, was more refined and articulate, and was responsible for helping develop the style into a more systematized teaching methodology. Art was also exposed to many of the old Eskrimadors whose names have been lost in the mists of time, who lived in the Stockton area and were invited by Gilbert Tenio to visit his academy to share their skills and experiences with his students.

After John Eliab died suddenly in the early 1990's, Tenio stepped up Arthur's training since he was next in line in the system, grooming him to take over instruction and to perpetuate this art. Now Gilbert Tenio did have a son, Richard, to whom he left Decuerdas as a family lineage. However, for personal reasons Richard deferred taking on this responsibility and so he retired, formally signing over the grandmastership to Arthur Gonzalez, who accepted with two conditions of his own: First, that the son can reclaim the position as head of the system if he so wishes, and the second is that Arthur could add "Diestro" to the name of his school. In this way he still teaches Tenio's Decuerdas, while anything he wishes to experiment or play with falls under a separate heading



Grandmaster Tenio, Art Gonzalez, and John Eliab

for which he alone is responsible.

His promotion was not without some controversy. Due to Decuerdas' underground nature, Art Gonzalez was not well known. Besides Decuerdas, Stockton has multiple schools of Bahalana and Serrada, as well as mixed systems like Dentoy Revillar's SLD (which stands for Serrada, Largo Mano and Decuerdas) and Carlito Bonjoc's Mata Sa Bagyo. There are probably more Escrimadors per capita in the region around Stockton than anywhere else outside of the Philippines, and close attention is paid by that Filipino martial arts community to those who would stand out. It is still a place where the only rank truly recognized is earned out on the floor or in the street, and Arthur has had his share of both kinds of challenges. The results, though, have only elevated his standing as one of the elite in such a Darwinian environment.

There are a few, unfortunately, who have chosen to play the game the modern way, anonymously challenging his rank from behind their computer keyboard. However, those who know his history and have seen the signed documents attesting to his position

will agree that Arthur Gonzalez wins that battle too. One testament to this acceptance has been his participation in the three Grandmaster Seminars offered in Stockton in 2006, '07 and '08, where he taught alongside Serrada's Vincent Cabales and Bahalana's Tony Somera.

Today the Grandmaster feels the time is right to bring his art into the public. What he

is offering is nothing less than a complete and comprehensive system with a strong fighting lineage, presented by a masterful teacher. Having first seen him teach in public at Bruce Juchnik's 2010 Gathering in Sacramento, then later at a private class near Lodi, I've been impressed by his ability to convey underlying principles as well as in-depth details of techniques with both clarity and

emotional content.

Grandmaster Gonzalez has taught military and law enforcement through his L.E.M.A.C. program (Law Enforcement Martial Arts Combatives), as well as courses for civilians such as Women's Elite Survival Tactics (W.E.S.T), Fast Assault Survival Tactics (F.A.S.T) and a tactical edged weapon course.



L - R: Master Instructor Daniel Siazon, Grandmaster Art Gonzalez, Guro Mike Cardenas, Master Instructor Jorge Magana. In back is student Travis Pond

Reflection of Grandmaster Gonzalez and DeCuerdas Eskrima

By Guro Mike Cardenas - www.dsdo.org

I have been a student of Grandmaster Gonzalez and a practitioner of DeCuerdas for nearly 14 years. I was first introduced to Grandmaster Gonzalez by my good friend Jorge Magana, who recently and deservedly received the rank of Master Instructors. At first I used to just visit and watch as Grandmaster Gonzalez taught

class out of the park and recreation building at Scribley Park in Stockton.

When he started teaching out of the on an old Renbukai Karate Dojo in North Stockton I finally became a student of his. I can still remember coming home frustrated that our instructor would spend so much time teaching us

concepts rather than systematic techniques. Having briefly dabbled in other arts during my youth, this unorthodox teaching method or style was not considered the norm for me. Sometimes I wondered if he wasn't simply honing his skills on his students by using us as guinea pigs and beating the hell out of us in order to perfect movements or test theories. Training was much more difficult back in the day and it wasn't unusual to come home with bruises and welts from hours of arduous training. Mr. Gonzalez was also less approachable. It took nearly year and half before he actually started calling me by name. If he needed me for something he would simply say "*you come here*", or the same phrase in Spanish. Due to the brutality of our training we rarely kept students long enough to remember their names. I suspect this is one reason we are a small yet close knit group. Grandmaster Gonzalez claims he is a kinder instructor now and I would have to agree with him.

It wasn't too long ago that I finally realized what my instructor was trying to accomplish and instill in his students. He wanted to create thinkers, and not typical martial artist who rely on struc-

tured movements to respond to an attack.

DeCuerdas is a reactive art, with devastating simplicity in motion. Every DeCuerdas movement has a distinct purpose, to either immediately disable your attacker or set him up for an additional barrage of strikes. I can attest that due to our conceptual way of thinking we can easily blend into other systems and hold our own. Artudo, as I now fondly refer to him, has opened my eyes to martial arts like no other

instructor. I believe DeCuerdas can only truly be appreciated by, an individuals who have studied in more traditional systems.

DeCuerdas also has a way of drawing in instructors of other systems who realize that this method of instruction is the holy-grail they had been searching for. I for one am truly grateful that I was introduced to “Artudo” and that I have been given a skill that not many people have. DeCuerdas has truly changed my life and helped

in my mental development. I was never one to take on challenges or take risks in life or strive to better myself. DeCuerdas gave me the courage to return to college after dropping out and it increased my self esteem. I am not sure how you thank a man that has been this influential in my life. DeCuerdas will always be a well-rounded art that can blend to any situation or adapt to any enemies’ fighting style. It is an evolving art that can change with the times or remain the same.

Respect

By Ron Saturno

My boss had a tail. Trailing behind him was a large Hispanic male. He was thirtyish with inquisitive eyes and a large frame... maybe a little overweight, but mostly he was new meat. Was he the kind of guy who could pull his weight on some hard jobs at the plant or was he the kind of guy who would leave you hanging on the back shifts by not showing up, forcing you to do a twelve hour shift. These were the things I really cared about.

He really did not talk to me for the first few days but he had an annoying habit of catching me practicing with my balisong. Was he the kind of guy who would tell the boss? These were my first few days of knowing Grandmaster Arthur Gonzales. We went on to work together for fifteen years at the plant. We had kids, divorces, trials and tribulations over the ensuing years. I eventually left the job behind but took our friendship with us.

Grandmaster Gonzales puts on a good show of humility. He is a large man trying to convince you that he is not a fox. He is sly and

possesses real genius. One need only spend a few minutes watching him wield a knife expertly to figure this point out. He jinxes left with the hand really meaning to go right. He comes forward really meaning to go back. He does everything with frightening precision and élan, not just for a big man but for any man.

Over the past twenty-five years or so of knowing Art there are just too many stories to repeat which many would find interesting. He can draw a mean stick-man for one. On the back shifts away from the prying eyes of the bosses he would spend hours between his tasks drawing little stick-men doing things. These little men had volumes of notes written by them telling various arcane tidbits about what they were doing and the whys. I soon figured out that they were evil little men doing evil things to other little stick-men, from these little men came the heart of his formulation of his version of DeCuerdas Escrima.

I’m not saying that his system does not follow the teachings of the late and great Great Grandmaster Gilbert Tenio. More importantly, these little men mapped out the very heart of Manong

Gilbert’s system. Manong Gilbert made sure that his students were capable of dissecting other systems in order to discover weaknesses. Manong Gilbert made his students fully capable of being able to think with a mathematical and vice-like precision. The stick-men were how Art began thinking out his teaching regimen. Thousands of little men later I can honestly say that he really and truly has thought out his system. Although some of his system was given to him, he used what was good for him and happily cast off the rest.

Manong Gilbert Tenio is probably the least known of the “Stockton Trio”, those being Manong Cabales, Manong Giron and Manong Tenio. But regardless of this fact, he was truly one of the most capable of the three. A top student of all three, Master Dentoy Revillar, is said to have told a few closest to him that he places Serrada Escrima of Manong Cabales over Manong Giron’s system, but puts DeCuerdas Escrima of Manong Tenio on top of the three. I don’t repeat this to start any controversy, just to put into perspective the high regard in which DeCuerdas Escrima is held. I am a Serrada man, and although I may

not fully agree, I will say that the DeCuerdas Escrima as practiced by Art is fully combat effective and would be another art I would have been happy to have learned. Besides Serrada, it is one that would be trusted by me to take into battle.

In other words, Art does DeCuerdas very well and would be one of the very few men walking the streets of Stockton who could break me into a sweat knowing he was coming to do me harm. Art, I love you man, but I have mojo for you! It is a SIG P220 in .45 with 1100fps. Corbon bullets which will do harm to any Escrimador... even you!

Now many might ask what the hell is a respected Serrada Master having to resort to a gun to stop another Escrimador? Well, this last bit of information is probably the most important about my friend. You cut him and you are going to have to kill him. He ranks as one of the few who is a real Escrimador here in Stockton. Sometimes here in Stockton we talk too much. Art is not one of the talkers and I love him for it. This is probably why we are still friends. I know that if we were to ever get physical neither one of us would walk away that day.

If anyone wishes to learn a combat art from a combative man, this is one of the men to learn from. I fully and comfortably recommend Art for training and I do not recommend lightly. Please seek out my friend when you are ready willing and able to really become combat effective. This is the mantra of Stockton, California Escrimadors: Is he combat effective? Well... Arturo... in a word YOU are.



Gilbert Tenio, Wally Jay, Chow Hoon



Grandmaster Tenio and John Eliab



James Muro and Art Gonzalez

Assisting Grandmaster Art Gonzalez in demonstrating techniques is Master Instructor Jorge Magana





- 1 Preparing to receive #5
- 2 Whipping parrying strike to hand to disarm
- 3 Snapping ridge to bicep to disarm
- 4 Snapping push and pull to dislocate elbow and disarm
- 5 Left hand check and Right hand face smash to disarm



www.decuerdas.com

Grandmaster Gonzalez can be contacted at:

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(209) 263-5801

A date to circle on your calendar! A two-day DeCuerdas camp is planned for April 2nd and 3rd, 2011, at a country retreat in northern California. Hosted by Grandmaster Arthur Gonzalez and Professor James Muro, it is open to anyone, beginners or experienced alike, who are interested in learning more about this system of Eskrima. Look for updated information at www.decuerdas.com, or contact Grandmaster Gonzalez through the contact information above.



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Rainbow Warrior Martial Arts was Founded in 1998 by actor, writer and martial arts expert Adam James, an instructor of Wei Kuen Do, Escrima, Kempo, Karate, Kung Fu, Jujitsu, Maui Thai Kickboxing, Boxing, Wrestling, Kenjutsu and Kobudo (weapons).

Adam's mentor is Leo Fong, action film star, writer, director, Black Belt Hall of Fame member, Bruce Lee's friend and training partner and author of numerous books including the brand new book "Beyond Kung Fu". Adam will be the successor for Grandmaster Leo Fong in the styles of Wei Kuen Do, Modern Escrima, and Chi Fung and holds the highest black belt

possible in Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate under Professor Michael Dela Vega.

Adam is also the creator of the Martial Arts Conditioning Specialist Certification for the National College of Exercise Professionals and is certified for the National Academy of Sports Medicine, USA Gymnastics and Hawaii Special Olympics. He specializes in martial arts conditioning, power lifting, Olympic lifting, plyometrics, speed and power training, gymnastics, sport specific training, running technique, flexibility training (basic to advanced stretching) and mental fitness/sports psychology (meditation, positive affirmations, visualization, psychoneuroimmunology and peak performance).

As an actor, Adam performed in the films "Under Siege" with Steven Seagal and "Steal Big/Steal Little" with Andy Garcia, and has worked as a martial arts film consultant and fight choreographer.

An Interview with Adam James

Senior Student of Leo Fong of Wei Kuen Do

FMAdigest: *Adam can you tell us about when and how you met Leo Fong?*

Adam James: I first met Leo at the Warner Center Club in Woodland Hills, California in 1993. I had moved to the mainland to open schools for the Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate Dojo and pursue my career goals as a writer and actor. I was working at the Warner Center Club as a personal trainer and teaching martial arts. When Leo and I met, we immediately hit it off and became friends as well as business associates. We started working on a television show concept and producing the show. Then over the years we started training together and I've been very fortunate to assist him in the changes and developments he's made to his original style of Wei Kuen Do as well as the creation of his new style Chi Fung.

FMAdigest: *Can you give an overall view on Wei Kuen Do? The principles of the art?*

Adam James: Leo created Wei Kuen Do in the early 1970s and wrote a book on it in 1976 called "Wei Kuen Do: the Psycho-Dynamic Art of Free Fighting." In the book, he describes the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of the style and shows how to integrate boxing punches, Korean style kicking and grappling with an emphasis on mobile, free fighting. It was one of the first books ever written on an eclectic approach to the martial arts - however, it is not just a system based on combining different techniques but rather how to blend them together into one complete approach. Wei Kuen Do means "the Way of the Integrated Fist" and this is the key to style - to truly integrate the techniques



and develop your inner self. Then, over the last ten years Leo has developed an amazing set of combinations and training drills after a spiritual experience that changed the course of his life. During this time, he and I were training on an almost daily basis and each time we would get together, he would have a new combination or subtle adjustment to work on. Over these

years, the combination sets were created and perfected.

FMA Digest: *Leo Fong created the five sets of combinations for Wei Kuen Do called - The Angles of Attack, The Circles of Destruction, The Trapping Combinations, The Quick Counters and The Faking Combinations. Can you break-down the theory behind each set of combinations and how each would be a factor in its use as a fighting tool?*

Adam James: All of the sets consist on 10 combinations that work cohesively with each other as well as the other sets. When Leo created the combinations, he had just retired from his career as a minister and during this time, he went through a spiritual experience that gave him a new perspective. He now had the free time to sit and contemplate his life's journey in the martial arts and the techniques that were truly effective. As I previously mentioned, he had created the style of Wei Kuen Do back in the 1970s but now he had the opportunity to crystallize his thoughts and perfect the techniques. He was inspired by the free



fighting approach of boxing, by his friend Bruce Lee and the principles of Jeet Kune Do and also by his experience in the Filipino martial arts. In particular, his friend Angel Cabales had a big influence on the creation of the new Wei Kuen Do combinations because Leo was very impressed by the way that Angel had organized the combinations for his style of Ser-rada Escrima. Angel had all of his techniques and combinations organized in sets of twelve and Leo designed his in sets of ten. Also, the V-step that Angel taught Leo is the basis for the footwork in all of the new combinations as well as the quick, light free fighting footwork of boxing. In addition, the strikes are based on the natural response of fighters and the possible ways that they will attempt to block and counter certain attacks.

- **The Angles of Attack:** The Angles of Attack are the foundation for Wei Kuen Do and all of the basic strikes are contained within these combinations. They are primarily the offensive techniques but they can be executed from a variety of defensive deflections.

- **The Circles of Destruction:** These combinations are the foundation for the defensive fighting skills and contain the core of the Angles of Attack strikes based off of specific deflections. In Wei Kuen Do, we don't believe in blocking hard but rather in using parries to deflect and diffuse the opponent's attack. It's like the saying to use four ounces of pressure to stop four thousand pounds of force. In many ways, Wei Kuen Do is like Aikido with striking - we strive to use the opponent's aggression against them. Also, the name contains circle because

all of the movements are based on circular motion and this builds the energy and power of the techniques.

- **The Trapping Combinations:** These combinations are based on the opponent's attempt to block the core attacks and then to use the principles of Wing Chun and Jeet Kune Do trapping. However, we don't attempt to overly grab and get caught up in trying to control the opponent's arms and instead we trap with a boxing structure. We use a "touch and go" approach that leads us to the next strike - in essence it's "trapping without trapping" because we don't grab the opponent.

- **The Quick Counters:** The Counters are combinations that we use based off the opponent's attack and lead to specific quick strikes. In essence, these are the basis for counter fighting and they are extremely effective against an aggressive opponent. All of these combinations contain the V-step, quick footwork and Angles of Attack strikes.

- **The Faking Combinations:** The Faking Combinations, as well as the new sets of combinations called the Expressions, the Double Strikes and the Footwork Angles are all for the fourth stage of development. We start with 1- Developing the Tools, then 2- Polishing the Tools, next comes 3- Dissolving the Tools and finally we reach 4- Expressing the Tools. All of the advanced combinations will come naturally and spontaneously after the practitioner has trained at the Angles of Attack, Circles of Destruction, Traps, and Counters

FMA Digest: *Can you give some insight on how it is to train with Leo Fong?*

Adam James: Wei Kuen Do is a

process of personal development and every person is different.

When we train someone we work with them on an individual basis - to see where they are at currently, what are their personal strengths and what is the area that they can improve upon the most. Ultimately, we work on the inner self - to develop relaxed focus and the ability to remain calm, composed and extremely effective.

As we've already discussed, Wei Kuen Do is a free fighting style that combines boxing punches, street fighting kicks, and grappling techniques with a foundation based on the energy of Kung Fu, the footwork of Escrima and the principles of Jeet Kune Do. This unique system combines the energetic training approach of Kung Fu with the physical structure and spontaneous explosiveness of western boxing.

Also, Leo has taken the principles of his friend Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do and given them new life and energy. He has gone deeper into these principles and created specific combinations and techniques that allow the practitioner to bring these skills to full development. We work on the four stages of martial arts skill:

- 1: Developing the tools (learning the techniques),
- 2: Polishing the tools (perfecting the techniques),
- 3: Dissolving the tools (eliminating rudimentary execution of the techniques), and finally
- 4: Expressing the tools (spontaneous and natural execution of the techniques).

To accomplish this, we've created the Five F's for training - Form, Footwork, Flow, Feeling and

Freedom. The core skills of Wei Kuen Do are simple but take great devotion to go to a higher level of ability. They are the basic strikes of boxing - the jab, hook, cross and upper cut as well as the light, quick and explosive footwork he has gleaned from Boxing, Kung Fu, JKD and the Filipino martial arts. Also, there are kicks, joint locks, chokes, etc but the most important skill is relaxed focus - the ability to move quickly and adjust to the opponent. Wei Kuen Do can also be defined as the Art of Detachment, which has physical, mental and spiritual implications.

We believe in keeping distance physically and moving laterally to create angles and striking opportunities. We also believe in remaining mentally detached from the feeling of anger and staying poised. And finally we believe in remaining spiritually detached from the material world and keeping ourselves focused on God and the higher calling.

FMA Digest: *What is the connection between the Filipino martial arts and Wei Kuen Do? What is Leo Fong's stick and knife fighting system Modern Escrima?*

Adam James: As we've dis-



cussed, Wei Kuen Do is deeply influenced by the Filipino martial arts - from the V-step footwork, to the emphasis on a flow of techniques as introduced to Leo by Remy Presas the Founder of Modern Arnis and also the organization of the curriculum based on Angel's Serrada Escrima. In addition, while the strikes are gleaned from boxing, Wei Kuen Do is not a sport martial art and like the Filipino martial arts, it is a combat art for street self-defense. The jab we execute has the same elusive, spontaneous, non telegraphic and explosiveness as the boxing jab, but we can perform it as a finger jab to the eyes and like a knife it can be lethal. Therefore, our approach is to maintain distance and use our skills to inflict serious damage rather than get caught up in grabbing and getting entangled with our opponent. It is also why we have a strong ethical and moral foundation for the art and we teach in side by side with the philosophy and principles of character development.

In regards to Modern Escrima, Leo created his own personal weapons style by blended the free fighting approach of Wei Kuen Do to the stick and knife fighting techniques he learned from Remy Presas's Modern Arnis and Angel Cabales's Serrada Escrima. Leo's Modern Escrima has its own 12 Strikes and a system of Counters similar to those in Serrada Escrima but it's performed with a short strike delivery and with a free fighting approach - it's very similar to boxing with sticks. We don't emphasize a specific positioning of hands or feet, but instead we focus on quickness and hitting the target. The end result is a weapons system that

perfectly complements the foundation of Wei Kuen Do and the free fighting philosophy.

FMAdigest: *How did you get started in martial arts? Who was your first teacher?*

Adam James: There are there people that stand out in my martial arts journey. First there is my father, David James and then my original sensei in Hawaii Michael Dela Vega, and now Leo Fong, my friend and mentor who has assisted me to reach even higher levels. I was born in the New York City area and then moved to Hawaii when I was nine years old. My father had been an officer in the Navy and he taught me the principles of the US military. Then, growing up in Hawaii, I trained in a variety of martial arts and I was fortunate to learn from many excellent martial artists. My close friend Scott Morimoto was the personal assistant to a man named Mito Uehara, who had owned Black Belt Magazine and O'Hara Publications before retiring to Hawaii. Mito had worked closely with Bruce Lee on several books and he would give Scott copies of them. We studied the books and we were all deeply inspired and influenced by Bruce. I also learned the principles of martial arts greatness through other endeavors like playing team sports, Hawaiian culture, military history and just being in the ocean and land of Hawaii. I played multiple sports in high school but I showed the most potential in football and was offered a scholarship to Northwestern University in the Chicago area. Although many people told me that I would go on to play in the NFL, I didn't stay at Northwestern and left during my junior year to go back to Hawaii to focus on writing

a book. The main character of my story was a Vietnam Veteran and martial arts expert and I wanted to get back into my training to do research. I reconnected with my friend Scott and he told me that I had to come train with this amazing martial arts instructor he was met. The school is called Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate and the Founder is Sensei Michael Dela Vega. Sensei Mike is a descendent of Chojun Miyagi and learned the Miyagi family system of Okinawan Kempo growing up. He also trained in the original Kajukenbo School in the Palama settlement under Joe Emperado, the younger brother of Adriano Emperado, one of the five original founders of the Kajukenbo system. Now, the story behind Kajukenbo is very interesting - in many ways it is the first mixed martial arts but it was designed as a style strictly for combat and street fighting situations. There were five top martial arts experts in Hawaii who were all close friends but came from different styles. They decided to train together and combine their techniques. One was an expert in Karate, another in Judo/Jujitsu, Emperado was the Kenpo master of the group and there was also one from Kung Fu also known as Chinese Boxing. They would explore the different possibilities of how the different styles would attack and defend each other and they looked for the best techniques.

The final outcome was a hybrid system called Ka (for Karate) - Ju (for Judo/Jujitsu) - Ken (for Kenpo) - Bo (for Chinese Boxing). Anyway, Sensei Mike joined the school during the early days when no women or children were allowed to train and Em-



perado would say - "*practice was not over until there was blood on the floor*". At the time, Mike was a teenager and he went down to the school with his close friend Kenneth Funakoshi, who was a relative of Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan Karate. Because of their family history, the boys were allowed to join the school and were part of that first generation of students. Later, Sensei Mike decided to enlist in the US Army and was accepted into the officers training program. He then went to Vietnam and became a long-range reconnaissance officer. He spent his time there venturing into enemy territory to gather information and call in air strikes. Sensei Mike would train everyday and make his men train with him before they would set out on their missions. He was asked to teach the Green Berets and other Special Forces units in martial arts and at one point was asked to train an entire base of soldiers. Then, he returned to Hawaii and officially opened the Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate Dojo but he often points out that the school

originally started in the jungles and battlefields of Vietnam.

Now, I've been training with Leo Fong, who has become my close friend and mentor. Also while growing up in Hawaii, I trained in a variety of martial arts including Karate, Judo, Sumo, Aikido, Muay Thai, and various styles of Kung Fu, as well as western wrestling and western boxing. Now that I'm living in Los Angeles, I've had the honor to know personally and professionally many of the greatest martial artists in the world such as Kam Yuen, Bill Ryusaki, Sid Campbell, Tadashi Yamashita, Bob Wall, Gene LeBell and many others.

FMAdigest: *Now you have your own business and website Rainbow Warrior Martial Arts (www.rainbowwarriormartialarts.com). Can you describe what it is about and what the program or program's consists of?*

Adam James: Rainbow Warrior Martial Arts is my own personal expression of martial arts wisdom and is a culmination and continuation of my martial arts journey. Our mission statement is building bridges and aiming for excellence in the martial arts and the world. We bring people together through private lessons, seminars, consultation, writing and film. Our motto is that no matter what your goal, style or experience we can assist you to reach your full potential. We teach the progressive training system of Wei Kuen Do that I helped create and perfect with Leo Fong as well as the martial arts styles of Kempo, Karate, Jujitsu, Kung Fu, Muay Thai Kickboxing, boxing, wrestling, Escrima, Kobudo, Chi Fung and JKD principles. I also include mental fitness training/sports psychology and martial arts condition-

ing through functional resistance training.

I chose the name Rainbow Warrior because of my roots in Hawaii and in recognition of all of the great martial artists that came from Hawaii. However, I also chose it because of the legend of the Rainbow Warrior that exists in several numerous Native American cultures.

It's an amazing fact that this legend can be found independently in several different tribes and yet there are phenomenal similarities. The legend is that there will come a time when the earth will be sick and that the animals will be dying. Then there will appear the Rainbow Warrior - that people of all colors and faiths will unite and rise to meet the challenges with dignity, humility, honesty, caring, sharing, and respect. The first Greenpeace ship was called the Rainbow Warrior and it sailed to end whale hunting and nuclear testing.

FMAdigest: *How have your teachers influenced you?*

Adam James: I've been very blessed to be able to train with Sensei Mike Dela Vega back in Hawaii and now to be working with Leo - they are both very religious men and they are both great martial artists. With Sensei Mike, the entire basis for Hawaii Shin Kan is the Development of the Mind, Body and Spirit Through Positive Mental Attitude and Faith in God. He created five Dojo Kuns that are very unique and special. Actually, he always says that he didn't create them but rather that they are from the Bible.

They are:

1 - To always have a Positive Mental Attitude in everything that we say and do,

2 - To always maintain proper conduct, good manners, dignity, humility and honesty towards others,

3 - To seek self-awareness aiming towards self-perfection of the Mind, Body and Spirit,

4 - To always maintain strong will-power, strength, courage and self-confidence and

5 - To always have unwavering faith in ourselves and God, our Heavenly Father. He's an amazing man and has had a huge impact on my life.

Then, with Leo, he's also simply incredible and has become my friend and mentor. Leo infuses Wei Kuen Do and everything he does with faith in God and Sports Psychology. In fact, Leo shared with me an experience that he had with Bruce Lee that changed his life and then, this in turn has impacted me. Leo told me that when he met Bruce, he was already an accomplished boxer, having boxed in the Golden Gloves and AAU Championships, and was still boxing with the Sacramento State Boxing team. He was also training in a variety of martial arts styles - he had a black belt in Moo Duk Kwan/Tang Soo Do, he was training in Judo/Jujitsu, training in Choy Lay Fut Kung Fu with Low Bun, in Sil Lum (Shaolin) Kung Fu with T.Y. Wong and also training with Bruce and Jimmy Lee in Wing Chun Kung Fu and the beginnings of Jeet Kune Do. Then one evening, Leo and Bruce were hanging out together and Bruce asked Leo, "Why are you running all over town training in all of these styles?" Leo replied, "I'm looking for the ultimate." And Bruce said, "The Ultimate is inside of you." Immediately, Leo felt a moment of inspiration because it

reminded him of the verse in the Bible that “The Kingdom of God is within you.” The philosophical implications were grand because it suggested that the knowledge of martial arts are inherently and intuitively inside you and that another person cannot teach you

how to know your own truth. Bruce also went on to explain the physical aspects of his view and that Leo had the ultimate already. Bruce said that with the boxing skills Leo already possessed and the kicks of the Korean style, the grappling from Judo/Jujitsu and

now the trapping from Wing Chun that was all a man needs. These words influenced Leo’s life journey as a man, a minister and obviously as a martial artist and then in turn this has been a lantern to my path.

Photos of Adam James Provided by Jose Fraguas of Masters Magazine

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Types of Arnis de Mano

By Emmanuel Querubin

Presently, there are typically two classifications of Arnis de Mano. The contemporary, and the classical. The contemporary may be sub-classified as “Combat Arnis” and “Sport Arnis.” On the other hand, the classical may be subdivided into “Traditional” and the “Esoteric.”

Whatever the classification is, they are all bound together by three common aspects: part art, part science, and part sports. With the advent of the Mataw-Guro Association, hopefully it will now also be bound as Filipino Martial Arts Education. However, each type can still be differentiated by the priority, and purpose of training.

There are schools of Arnis de Mano that concentrate in teaching the art mainly as a means of defense and as a combative art, such as in police agencies and the military. The emphasis of their training is in the combat aspects of Arnis. These schools do not engage much in “scoring points” and winning trophies or medals. To them, Arnis de Mano is 100% strategy of neutralizing the opponent in an exponential rate to counteract and eliminate the threat.

And then, there are schools the priority of which is to broaden their base of following and income by winning trophies and medals in competitions. They may be classified, as the Sports Arnis Schools. To these schools, the gauge of whether the school is good or not, is by the number of tournaments they win. To them, Arnis de Mano is 100% “scoring points” and

garnering as many trophies and medals as they can. These are normally commercial schools.

“Sports Arnis” is an attempt to keep alive the “live blade” encounters of yesteryears. But because these confrontations are against the law and against survival instincts, padded sticks and protective gear have taken the place of live blades in an “all-out survival of the fittest” contests.

Although the techniques and strategies may be the same as contemporary Arnis, the ideals of classical Arnis de Mano are entirely different.

The “traditional” Arnis de Mano is part art, part science, and part sports. As an art, Arnis de Mano is a dance form that is uniquely Filipino. Watching a skilled Arnisador perform the techniques of abecedario and other strategies accompanied by music is like watching birds in formation while in flight. The graceful transition from one motion to another is both natural and energetic. Style and form in traditional Arnis de Mano, is just as important as speed and power, perhaps even more. To achieve style and form every movement must be governed, by the laws of physics and motion. During Arnis gatherings and events, practitioner of traditional Arnis will demonstrate their art, rather than compete in tournaments. To them displaying the grace and beauty of Arnis is like displaying the beauty of a painting or architecture. To them beauty in the execution of a strategy, is more of a sports than

trying to knock the @\$%&* of the other guy.

The least talked about type of Arnis de Mano, is the “Esoteric” type. This type is also governed by the three aspects of art, science and sport, but with the added aspect of “spiritualism.”

In the olden days, this type of Arnis was probably the only type that was commonly practiced with all the combative aspects. Before the coming of the Spaniards, the country, that is now the Philippines, was a nature-worshipping pagan country. Every family has its own talisman or charm, which avert evil and bring good fortune, magical and miraculous powers. The anting-anting or agimat came in different forms, shapes and size. The oracion (incantations) also came in different languages or sounds. With the Christianization of the Philippines, the culture, beliefs and the agimat took on a different character. The most common agimat or anting-anting came in the form of the crucifix, the rosary or the scapular. Spanish and Latin became the most common incantation or oracion. Arnisadors do not go to a possible confrontation without their agimat and their oracion. In fact, they do not step out of their homes without uttering some magical words or rubbing their agimat. As the Filipinos were converted to Christianity, they slowly transitioned their pagan practices and started basing it more on their newfound religion. The prayers in Latin or Spanish of “Our Father,” “Hail Mary” and “Glory

be”, became the most common oracion. The crucifix or the scapular of the Virgin Mary, hanging on the neck, became the most common anting-anting.

But there were still those who hanged on to the old tradition and have not “Christianized” their anting-anting and oracion. Most of these were the manggamot (healers), arbularyo (herbalist) and the hilot (bone-setter). And not surprising, those who practice the “healing” arts, are also adept in the “killing” arts. Could have this been a Chinese influence? In China, before learning the “killing” arts, one must have trained in the “healing” arts.

In the 1950’s, while vacationing in my mom’s province of Bauan, Batangas, I heard that it was time for my Lolo Andres, the local manggamot to fight the “spirit warriors,” to restore the vitality of his healing powers and his fighting skill. Lolo Andres did this every Good Friday midnight, in a “secret” place hidden from view and away from prying eyes. It was claimed that he has done this since he was a child when he was first initiated in the mysteries of the esoteric. When his father passed away it was rumored that his father passed on to him his anting-anting. Following in the footsteps of his late father, he became the barrio manggamot (healer). Another trade he inherited from his father was selling mosquito nets and mats, where he learned and became an expert in the use of the tungkli or pingga, a 4 to 6 foot flat pole made of bahi (iron wood).

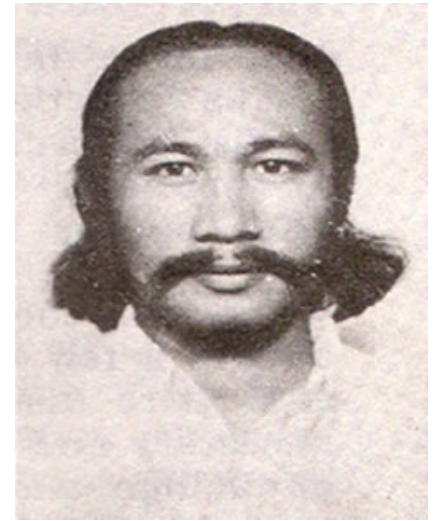
On the night of the ritual, I sneaked out of the house to follow Lolo Andres, without telling anybody. From a distance I hid

behind a tree, and watch Lolo Andres performed some ceremonials. All of a sudden Lolo Andres started swinging his tungkli against what may have been an opponent, but whom I cannot see. The “fight” against the “spirit warrior” went on for minutes then hours. I strained to see if he really has an opponent, but in the dim light of the moon all I can see was Lolo Andres. Finally, after several hours, at the break of dawn, Lolo Andres started for home. As he passed me half-crouched next to the tree half awake and half asleep, all he said was “kaya pala” (no wonder). When I got home, my aunts and uncles scolded me and said what I did was very dangerous for me and for Lolo Andres. They said that Lolo Andres had a very hard time because he was “carrying me on his shoulders.” They also said that the “spirit warriors” could have killed me or Lolo Andres. But I was not afraid. I had my own anting-anting crucifix hanging on my neck and I have recited my oracion. I was even boasting that my God was stronger and more powerful, than all the “spirit warriors,” which I cannot see.

After that incident Lolo Andres refused to teach me anymore except the first technique he taught me and since then he has not spoken to me until he passed away. Lolo Andres supposedly passed his anting-anting to his son, but his son never became a successful healer because he indulged too much in alcohol and died at an early age, not amounting to anything like his late father. To this day, I never understood what the “big deal” was in what I did.

In the early 1960’s, I met

Jimmy Galez, for the first time. His demeanor and mannerisms suggested that he is a practitioner of “Esoteric Arnis.” Having learned



Jimmy Galez

my lesson with the incident with Lolo Andres I was cautious with my dealings with Jimmy Galez.

One time, I attended a martial arts tournament in Baguio City, where Jimmy Galez was also a guest. Jimmy demonstrated his brand of Arnis. With flowing long hair, facial hair and an ornate gown-like cassock, his moves reminded me of Lolo Andres when he was supposed to be fighting “spirit Warriors.” During the break, Jimmy and I had a friendly conversation. He confided that he is indeed an “initiated member of “Esoteric Arnis” and in fact has just came back from his mountain training to energize and revitalize not only his skill but also his agimat. When I told him that most in the martial arts circle consider him too eccentric, and was not considered a serious martial artist, he just smiled. When he asked me what I think of him, I just smiled in return. Interestingly, those who did not consider Jimmy Galez a serious martial artist avoid crossing his path. A serious martial artist or not,

Jimmy Galez is a well-trained and highly skilled confident but humble individual.

The height of the mistrust in anting-anting and “Esoteric Arnis,” came in the mid 1960’s, when the Lapiang Malaya, headed by Valentin delos Santos, was massacred by the military and police who responded to suppress their “uprising.” Armed only with bolos and their anting-anting, the Lapiang Malaya were no match against M16’s and 45 caliber bullets. After this incident, the belief in anting-anting and oracion, although still practiced, became less vocal. Practitioners of “Esoteric Arnis” shied away for fear of being ostracized.

In 1967-1968, I was commissioned to be the Head Foreign Instructor of the Karate Association of Malaysia. During a Chinese Festival I watched a group doing what they call “Spirit Kung Fu,” Bystanders who were supposed to be ignorant in Kung Fu all of a sudden will fall into a trance and be transformed into Kung Fu masters when “Spirit Warriors” possess their body. They start doing Kung Fu exercises and maneuvers for hours. Then as sudden as their transformation into Kung Fu masters, they will return to normal “without any memory of their experience.” While watching them I was reminded of Lolo Andres and Jimmy Galez. I went back to our gym with doubts about what I just witnessed. I wanted to dismiss it as a fake ritual, but that same day I also watched fire-walking while devotees carried about 100 pounds of icons of their gods supported by stakes that penetrate their bodies. It took these devotees more than 10 minutes to traverse the over 20 feet long burning coal

and rocks while dancing and chanting their “secret prayers.” I examined the feet and body of these devotees after the ritual but none of them even showed traces of being burned, injured or even discomfort. Although there were marks of the stakes, there was no wound or blood. Then I remembered some devotees in the Philippines, who are “crucified” on Good Friday, as a form of penance. To this day I have kept an open mind about things that I cannot explain and it has helped me, not only in the martial arts but in life in general.

In the early 1970’s, I met a promising young Karate practitioner from Negros Oriental, named Inocencio Glaraga. While giving a seminar, Glaraga tried to pick Louelle Lledo and my brain. Louelle and I called him “eager beaver” because he will not leave us alone. He tagged along wherever we went, volunteering himself as our guide in exchange for lessons. His perseverance paid off



Inocencio Glaraga

when he won the regional tournament and was selected to represent the region during the First Philippines International Karate Championships. When he did not make it to the national team which will represent the Philippines in the Third World Karate Championships, Glaraga set aside his Karate training and concentrated in Arnis de Mano, moving from one province to another, in search of more knowledge. He came under the tutelage of several Arnis teachers. He became “initiated in the Esoteric art,” and learned to distinguish the “Esoteric” masters from the “non-esoteric” masters. As his involvement with the masters of the “Esoteric” art went deeper and deeper, his “conversion to eccentricity” also went deeper and deeper. He started wearing clothing that was out of the ordinary. He wore beads and necklaces, which were “blessed” to insure his safety. He uttered oraciones in language that only he can understand. Every so often he will go up in the mountains by himself, hike for miles and fast for days. He claims this ritual energizes and invigorates him. Without even food or water, he tries to live off nature. He has not cut his hair for years. He talked about books and writings that only the “initiated” can understand.

In the 1980’s, Ciok (as he became known), joined Louelle Lledo who was teaching at the NBI Training Academy. They trained together and developed the Amara rapillon and other Amara maneuvers and techniques, which was supposed to have come from the “Book of Amara-tan,” or the book of the “root knowledge.” The swooshing of Ciok’s sticks earned him the nickname “Singing Sticks

of Ciok.” Like Jimmy Galez, Ciok was not taken seriously in the martial arts circle. But nobody can deny that Ciok is a walking encyclopedia of Arnis knowledge.

The 1980’s marked the proliferation of Arnis schools and systems and titles of all sort. Louelle and Ciok toyed with the idea of unification under one umbrella organization (like the Philippine Karate Association) and standardization of techniques as Filipino Martial Arts Education. They even coined the term Mataw-Guro from mataas ang tanaw na guro (teacher of high standard). But it remained just an idea, for

almost 30 years.

Finally in 2010, the Mataw-guro Association was formed. Two organizational meetings were held to solidify the association, one was held in Quezon City, Philippines and another in New Jersey, USA. On October 3, 2010, the charter was officially signed and submitted for registration, with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Intellectual Properties Office. With standardization and unification in their program, will the Mataw-Guro Association herald the demise of “Esoteric Arnis?”



Filipino Martial Arts Education for Arnis de Mano



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The mission of the FMA Pulse to help promote, educate and serve as a resource for the current and new generation of FMA enthusiasts.

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Sincerely,
The FMA Pulse Team

In Search of Filipino Martial Arts

By Marc Lawrence

Over the years I have heard folks say this place or that has good Filipino martial arts. I have read many posts about this place and that place having good Filipino martial arts that we call Arnis Eskrima or Kali, both here in the US and abroad, but that leaves me wondering where someone can find good Filipino martial arts.

In my travels I found that where you have sizable Filipino population, there are Filipino martial arts. I have found pockets in Florida, Hawaii, Nevada, Southern and Northern California. I have heard of pockets back east and down in Texas and up in Washington. I know that there are places overseas like Mexico, Saudi Arabia, one of my students found it in Indonesia, another one found it in Hong Kong.

If you start with the Philippines as the center, then we would be out on the edge or as you would call it the Frontier. These teachers have to be bold to be out to the edges of the Frontier to go there. The fact being, that there are other fighting arts that those Eskrimador's are running into and having to face. Welcome to a brave new world. This article is about one of those places on the frontier that we call Hawaii.

Filipino martial arts in Hawaii 2010

Hawaii is almost legendary in its history of Filipino martial arts here in the USA. Back in the days of Hawaii being a territory, there were No-gear Eskrima matches that were finally banned due to the brutality of the fights. There were actual deaths that occurred from some of these fights. Most people don't know this but Filipinos have lived in Hawaii for over 100 years. The Filipinos of Hawaii came to work in the early 1900s in the plantations of sugar, then coffee and latter pineapple. With the Manong's came the Arts we call Eskrima, Arnis or Kali. These were brave men that came as pioneers in to a new territory of the US. They came as 1 year contract workers-Sacadas as they were called and then some stayed to raise families. These brave men and women came from the islands of Luzon and Cebu. There were Ilocano, Cebuano and Tagalog all throw together in the Filipino Camps by the Sugar companies. The Sugar Company bosses thought that all Filipinos were the same. Many of the old Eskrimador's organized in camps and formed councils for



strength against the Sugar Company bosses who would try a play the different immigrant groups against each other. Each plantation had only one meeting hall which meant everyone went to birthdays, wedding, dances and other social events together. That forged the spirit of working and getting together and getting along with everyone. This led to organization of labor unions. According to local oral history every Filipino Camp had a council of Eskrimador's.

One of the well know groups was the Mancado Council that formed around Master Mancado, who supported who supported the early days of the organized labor movement, and who bought

land and built the church which still hosts a Eskrima group today, Below this church, is a garden area with a statue honoring Master Mancado and his work. Below the church in bottom of the valley are two houses side by side. These houses are connected to make a courtyard inside. This court yard in quite famous locally, as it was the local Eskrimador's meeting and practicing place in the Kalihi Valley. Many well know Eskrimadors went there and played to keep their skills sharp and share their knowledge.

Most people I met called their art either Eskrima or Kali as part of their name. Every school I heard about and visited trains in

a park or on rainy days go inside a church meeting hall or community center or someone's garage. I found that both Chinese and Filipino schools have operated this way since their beginning in Hawaii. Because I was there to visit my family on the island, I did not get time to meet with all of the groups there but I did meet with a number of them. One of the things that I was most impressed with was the number teachers and students that had been training in Eskrima for years. I met Eskrima practitioners who have been training for 20, 30, 40, and 50 or more years. All of them are still training every day! One group I talked with joked with me about how their youngest instructor was only practicing 20 years. One of the unusual things about Eskrima in Hawaii is the terminology, I am used to using Visayan terms or English terms as that was the way I was taught, but there terminology for Filipino martial arts is a mixed Ilocano, Tagalog, Cebuano and English. Considering the history of the camps it was not surprising.

There are quite a number of Eskrima groups around island of O'ahu, but due to my schedule I was only able to meet up with four Eskrima groups and these were: Pedoy's Derobio Eskrima of the Kalihi Valley, OLA'A-NALO Eskrima, Mamilias Eskrima and Del Mar Eskrima.

Downtown Branch of the Pedoy School of Eskrima

in the Kalihi Valley



House in Kalihi valley were all the old Eskrimadors used to meet and play

The Pedoy School of Eskrima teaches the Derobio style in the Kalihi Valley and is one of the oldest Eskrima Schools on Oahu. The downtown branch of the Pedoy School of Eskrima began and still trains at the Master Moncado Church grounds in the garden area. When it rains the group goes inside the church meeting hall. The Pedoy School was founded by Braulio Tomada Pedoy in 1963. Over 2,000 students have passed through the main and downtown branches of the schools. The downtown branch is run by First Instructor Leslie Largo and Master Carlton Kramer. Leslie introduced Eskrima to Master Carlton back in 1971. Leslie and Carlton worked together and it was Leslie who said for him to come and try it. Carlton was told on his first class by Batikan Eddie Pedoy that "there are no observers" and he was handed a stick to start training. That was 40 years ago! He started training with Great Grandmaster Braulio and stay with him for 20 years, and then he trained

for 10 years with Bakitan Eduardo Pedoy and finally 10 years with Grandmaster Tyrone Takahashi. Not many Masters have been with one family style for 40 years.

Under Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy, the training was so intense only adult males were able to handle the training methods. Then when his son took over, Bakitan Eduardo Pedoy's vision was to not only to teach men to fight, but to start teaching children at age 6 and his vision was to train women to be instructors. Great Grandmaster Braulio use to say, "That the girls were as good as the boys in Eskrima in the Philippines." Fathers taught their daughters in case their village was raided by another village or Island. In the old days men from a village would get killed and the women and children were placed in slavery. So it was important that the girls knew how to fight for themselves, their families and for their village. Great Grandmaster Braulio said to Carlton that the weapon was the equalizer and that the Eskrimadoras



Master Carlton Kramer

in the Philippines were absolutely fantastic and could hold their own against any male!

Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy was the first Escrima Master in Hawaii to teach non-Filipinos Escrima. Carlton told me that other Masters criticized Braulio for opening up the art to other races, but his only response is that “*All men are equal under God*”. Today the downtown branch of the Pedoy

School of Escrima has instructors that have been teaching for 40-50 years! Also Chief Instructor Peter Small and Chief Instructor Knut Peacock have been with them for 38 years.

Great Grandmaster Pedoy said to Carlton that Derobio is over 2,000 years old and means to flow with the force and to always move in on the opponent. Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy was a spiritual man and he shared this with his students. Prayer and salutations are given at the beginning and ending of each class. In the class the students have principles shared with them. Pedoy’s principles were Harmony, Humanity, Humbleness, and Wisdom.

The basics of Derobio Escrima lessons includes one stick, two sticks, staffs, knives, one bolo and two bolos. Sinawali with offense and defense is also taught. Derobio’s defense always forms a cross, Great Grandmaster Braulio said that the sign of the cross will protect you, place your foundation on Derobio but also learn the inside styles, because to be good, you need to know the outside and inside methods of fighting. Cal-

ranza/Sayaw or forms are done by all students with one and two bolos or machetes.

I asked Master Carlton how many counters did they have and he replied 1728, 12 times 12 times 12 counters that Great Grandmaster Braulio had taught him. The basic system is a 12 counter system to represent the 12 apostles of Christ according to Master Carlton. One change from training that Master Carlton shared with me was the 6 and 7 thrust to eyes were dropped to throat and chest for safety reason because of too many eye injuries in the early 1970s.

The Kalihi Valley branch is done as non-profit club and all money from donations is given to the church that hosts the classes. The club works hard to give opportunities to students in lower income areas that otherwise would not have the opportunity to train in the art.

Visitors are always welcomed, but you will be asked to grab a stick and line up.

Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday at 6-8pm at the Master Moncado Church.

For more information about classes contact Master Carlton Kramer at: alohacarlton@hotmail.com



Ola'a-Nalo Jungle Style Eskrima of Hawaii



Ola'a-Nalo Eskrima is a weapons based martial art that draws influences from the various martial arts of the Pacific Basin. A new student must first become proficient in the basic movements of Derobio Eskrima before advancing to the terrain blade fighting movements of Jungle Style.

Master Ron explained to me that in Jungle Style they utilize the Cinco Teros, "5 strikes". Focus is on direct movements, direct counters, and direct disarms, believing if it take more than 3 moves it is too many. Bladed techniques are learned. Light to medium sparring is required in



Senior Master Ron England

this level of training. Heavy sparring and/or tournament fighting is optional but encouraged. Rough terrain jungle combat is practiced. The Eskrimador must learn how to use the jungle terrain to his or her fighting advantage. Weapons utilized in this open training are various length daggers and machetes. Firearms familiarization is encouraged. Ron's shared his martial philosophy with me, which is: *Survival is always my first concern*. He said his purpose in teaching the Filipino martial arts is to pass on the teachings that he learned from his master and share his own martial techniques and life experiences that he has acquired in 30 years of training in the Filipino martial arts and 60+ years of living in the Pacific basin and around the planet.

Over the past 30 years many people have come through his classes and he has therefore cross-trained in several styles of Filipino martial arts as well as several other martial arts. His primary focus in martial training has always been: "*will the movement work in actual combat*". These many years of training have led to the development of the (SPKF) **Sure Point Knife Fighting System**. The SPKF tournament scoring method is based upon the number of ink marks or "cuts" one receives

when sparring in timed matches. The marks or cuts are counted up; if you receive too many points you are disqualified. It is better to give than receive.

Master Ron shared with me his thoughts on spirituality and healing. As a traditional Filipino martial arts instructor he believes the martial and healing arts are parallel pathways; they follow the same path and you must study both. In addition to instructor certificates in Eskrima, Ron also holds a 2nd degree in Reiki (traditional Usui method) and has trained in the healing disciplines of Hilot and Magnetic Therapies. He said that many of his instructors and students also practice the healing arts and he has a strong opinion that as in Yin and Yang, positive and negative, balance is essential for harmony. He feels it is essential that a person should master not only the martial arts but the healing arts as well.



The **Ola'a-Nalo Eskrima Honolulu branch** trains at the Old Stadium Park, which is located at the corner of S. King and Isenberg streets. Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursdays 6:30-8:30pm and most Saturdays 2-4pm. Ola'a-Nalo Eskrima also has branch schools in Maui, New York, Washington D.C. and Iowa. Their web address is www.olaa-naloeskrima.com and they can also be found on Face Book.

Mamalias Kali of O'ahu

This article is based upon my interview members of Mamalias Kali, Richard Bulacan, Grandmaster and other historical data bases.

The beginning of Mamalias Kali begins with Francisco "Frank" Padilla Mamalias, who was born on the island of Kauai and raised there. His father Pedro was one of the original 15 Sakadas or Filipino contract labors who came to Hawaii at the beginning of the last century. Pedro came from the Visayan Island of Cebu to islands of Hawaii. Frank Mamalias was raised in the Plantation lifestyle.

Plantation life was hard, harder than most people imagined and has been described as "being cast to the edge of the earth". This was the frontier out on the islands! The workers were paid 10 cents an hour and Frank watched for years as his father worked hard in the fields. Frank helped his family by working part time in the fields as child while going to school.

Frank learned as a young man to operate heavy equipment, which paid better, and by doing that it later allowed him to have shot at becoming a manager on a plantation. According to local history Francisco "Frank" Padilla Mamalias also was a well known Eskrimador as was his father. Frank's mother, Gertrude was a Hilot or a healer in the camp. Frank Mamalias trained with his father as well as other masters. He had 14 masters that he trained with, the most probably being with Grandmaster Floro Villabrille. Frank had a simple motto that he lived by which was "Never give up hope".

Frank was also known as a traditional musician who played ukulele and the mandolin. He used his life experiences to mold himself and founded what is referred



and the Mamalias style of Kali patterned off of the Doce Pares system. In his passing in May of 2006 he was listed as Grand Master Martial Artist.

But his style did end there... He passed his art on to someone that he treated like a son. Frank met a young man named Richard "Bula" Cordeino Bulacan whom he took under his wing and taught him his art. Bula inherited the art upon the passing of Frank Mamalias. This art is known as Kaliradman which according to local history is the original Doce Pares. The basic style that was shared with me was a two-weapon system, like short sword and dagger in length, using figure-8 motions, circular motions, linear motions with ½ beat and quarter beat strikes. They use a 1 block for 1 strike with two counter strikes. Bula said that he was taught that if they strike at you that you should be able to hit them 9 times.

This style has many layers, 12 from each angle. This style uses dance or Sayaw as part of its training to teach at each level. They use the Sayaw to teach the

motion which can be refined once the basic motion is learned. The movements are done first with the stick, then empty hands, then stick and empty hands, then blade and blade with empty hands, then empty hands verses weapons. The Mamalias style also has a very spiritual/mystic side as well. There is healing-Hilot training as well as the spiritual training as part of the style.

Bula a retired fireman, shared with me that he had many times in his life his protection kept him safe in dangerous situations in his work. Bula said that his Kali training helps create a mindset to learn other things in life, as the art teaches you to break things down to its smallest unit to learn them.

This group accepts members by invitation and recommendation only. The group votes on membership and you must be at least 20 years old to join. This they feel has to do with maturity of a person. This group wishes to keep the old ways alive for the next generation.

Del Mar School of Martial Arts of Hawaii

The Del Mar School of Martial Arts was founded as a school by Grandmaster Mike Del Mar in Hawaii. The Del Mar Eskrima is based upon the Del Mar family style and on Grandmaster Mike Del Mar's life experiences. The Del Mar family has quite a history with both the Philippines and Hawaii. Mike Del Mar is second oldest of a family of eight. He shared this story with me.

It started back with his father, Jesus "Susing" Del Mar who part of the Original Doce Pares in 1939. Susing Del Mar was also military man serving in the Philippine Scouts. He fought against the Imperial Army of Japan with his fellow soldiers in December 1941. They held out at Corregidor until the spring of 1942. He and the others were forced to surrender to Imperial Japanese Army. They were marched in the infamous Bataan Death March where he was prisoner of war in Camp O'Donnell.

While he was prisoner of



war, he was made to care for the sick. This allowed him access to quinine to help fight his malaria and access to people outside the camp as he was assigned with others to get supplies for the Imperial Japanese guards. It was there at the vendors that he met his future wife. With her and others help he was able to escape the Prison Camp. Susing Del Mar joined the guerilla resistance and used his skill and leadership as an Eskrimador to fight the Imperial Japanese. Mike Del Mar told me that his father had a price on his head, being a leader of a resistance group during the war. He said that he and his brother were born in a bamboo hut. Mike was born in 1945 in the back country of Bohol. He said that his mother had no mid-wife to help with the birth and that she had to use a strip of green Bamboo to cut his umbilical cord.

Mike said his brother had memories of hiding in caves from Japanese. His brother used to talk about them when they were growing up. Mike said that his mother carried machine gun on her while he was in a basket on her back. He said that his father instructed his mother to keep three bullets for themselves in case they were captured so as to keep her and the children from being tortured to death to get information about Susing's whereabouts. Susing's wife was afraid of snakes and there were many snakes in those caves. To this day Mike said his mother still hates snakes. The family against terrible odds survived the war and Susing Del Mar served as one of General Douglas MacArthur's body guards upon his return with the allied forces.



The Del Mar family immigrated to the Hawaiian island of Oahu in 1949. From there they went to Onomea Camp on the Hilo side of the Big Island (Hawaii). This was a Sugar Plantation with all kinds of different peoples. Mike said at first his father had a hard time living around the Japanese because of the war. Mike said as kid growing up in the Camp he got into fights with other kids. Mike said that living the camps taught him how to get along with everybody as the camp only had one community meeting hall that everybody had to share.

Mike said that his father Susing loved the chicken fights and boxing. Mike said his father taught him empty hands versus knife first. He said that he was helping his father with the chickens and was using a knife, when his father said try and cut him with the knife. Mike said that he said no and his dad said if he did not he would get a beating, so Mike tried to cut his dad as instructed. Mike said next thing he knew the knife was fly-

ing one way and he disarmed and knocked down. That was his first introduction to the Filipino martial arts. Mike said that his father would tie each of the boy's hands together and have them try and cut each other with the knives for training.

Mike told me that he trained with his dad until high school and at the end of high school he joined the service as a Marine. He said he did two tours in Vietnam in 1965 and 1966. He said that he came back to the islands and then went to college. He said that he went back into the USMC; after that enlistment he got out and joined the Hawaiian Air National Guard. He stayed in the Air Force until he retired. Now Mike Del Mar's training did not stop as he went off to fight in the war. He continued his training in the Filipino martial arts after meeting with a well known Eskrimador. It was set up through Josephine "Joey" in 1974. He was introduced to Raymond Tobosa and was accepted as student. Mike said that he trained with Master Tabosa until he passed away. Mike also trained with Maestra Josephine "Joey" Mica, who later became his wife. Grandmaster Mike Del Mar and Maestra Joey Del Mar are a teaching couple who have continuously taught their style for many years.

It was Master Tabosa who encouraged Mike to go the mainland and train in Eskrima in Stockton. Mike trained with Masters Dentoy Revillar, Ramiro Estrelia, Gilbert Tenio, and Professor John Eliab Sr. Mike spoke highly of Professor Eliab and told about being at the seminar when the Professor had his heart attack and died. Mike said that he did CPR on his friend and teacher at that seminar. In



Grandmaster Mike Del Mar and Master Lawrence

Mike Del Mar's travels in Hawaii, he came across an old Eskrimador whom he was introduced to as Manoy Godoy. Manoy Godoy's style was called Toledo Style and was a long range style. Manoy Godoy taught Mike his methods of long range fighting.

Because of Mike Del Mar's involvement with many Filipino martial arts groups he helped start a number of Organizations. He started the Filipino Martial Arts Society of Hawaii and help host the first Solo Baston tournament in 1997. He helped found HOPE- Hawaiian Organization of Pilipino Eskrima. He and his wife's school were one of four founding schools.

Grandmaster Mike Del Mar's instructors started the Samanahan tournament in 2008 and it was held on Oahu. It is the only one, that uses an electronic scoring system which is shown in real time. It is Grandmaster Mike Del Mar's hope that one day this type of tournament will be used widely and become part of the Olympics.

Because of all of these life experiences Mike Del Mar organized Del Mar Eskrima-Kali. It uses long 36-40 inch stick, medium length 29-30 inch sticks, 18-20 inch short Serrada length sticks using single stick double stick, blade and empty hands. Because Grandmaster Mike Del Mar's father was a boxer in the Philippines and in Hawaii in early days in Camps, the empty hand fighting is quite good. I can personally vouch for Grandmaster Mike Del Mar's stick and blade work as well as I had the pleasure of working out for an afternoon with him in Waipahu.

One more thing that I found out in my visit with Grandmaster Mike Del Mar is that he is quite talented craftsmen with wood. As woodworker myself, I know a good finish carpenter and craftsman when I see one. He showed me some of his work and it was some of the finest I have seen. He told me that he enjoyed making weapons and training with them like I do.



For more information and to train with him at his school:
Del Mar School Filipino Martial Arts Kali-Escrima
528 Ihe St., Honolulu, HI. 96817
(808) 723-2792
Website: escrima.freeservers.com/delmar
Email: gmastermdm@yahoo.com

Maestra Joey Del Mar School Eskrima Academy of Hawaii

Not many women are Masters in a Filipino martial arts style. Maestra Joey Del Mar has been there and done it. While I was in Hawaii I heard stories about her skill and tenacity as a fighter from men that she fought as well as other who were witness to some intense matches. Here is some background about her.

Maestra Joey Del Mar was born in Honolulu, Hawaii. She was raised in Waiahole Valley, in Kaneohe, Hawaii. This place was known as the resting place of the Alii or Royalty of the Hawaiian Monarchy. Her grandmother and great grandmother were Eskrimadoras also. Her training started in High School from her aunt who was student of Professor Chow. Maestra Joey Del Mar trained in the self defense techniques of Kajukenbo Karate in Hawaii and California. She was introduced to Eskrima when introduced to Master Raymond Tobosa. In 1974, three years after attaining her esteemed title of Maestra or Instructress, she began her teaching

career with martial arts enthusiasts at the Waialua Gym on Oahu. Maestra Joey Del Mar did not limit herself but continued training with other Eskrima Masters.

Maestra Joey Del Mar was instrumental in spear-heading and instructing Eskrima as a subject class for adults and children in community and school programs throughout Oahu in Campbell High School, Kaiulani Elementary and Intermediate School's Law Enforcement Program, Kalihi Community Service Center, Windward Oahu Community Key Project Program in Kahaluu and the Leeward Community College. Maestra del Mar's enthusiasm for Eskrima extended to California in Alameda. She helped establish branches of the Tobosa School of Kali thus introducing this art to other martial arts enthusiasts.

Maestra del Mar firmly states "*I have always been an advocate of Filipino cultural perpetuity and when I learned of my heritage in the Filipino martial art of Eskrima/Kali, I vowed to do all*



I can toward the continuity of its philosophies and mastery.

Maestra del Mar and her students have performed demonstrations for community festivals, martial arts conventions, beauty pageants, and martial arts programs, throughout the State of Hawaii, California, Idaho, and Nevada.

Maestra Joey Del Mar's classes are held in Aiea, Hawaii.

Contact Information:

Email ldystx@yahoo.com

(808) 381-5539

Grandmaster Ben Largusa

(1926 - 2010)

Farewell, Ben T. Largusa
FMA Legend and Kali Grandmaster
By Zena Sultana Babao

“To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die.” - Thomas Campbell

“Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, Love leaves a memory no one can steal.” - Author Unknown



Kali Grandmaster Ben T. Largusa - a Filipino martial arts legend and one of the greatest martial artists in the world – has left the narrow bonds of earth to touch the face of God!

Grandmaster Largusa passed away at age 84 early Sunday morning, October 3, 2010, in his home in Kauai, Hawaii. A high-ranking yet truly humble martial artist, a husband, father and grandfather, he was preceded in death by his sons Lance and Layne, and is survived by his wife Philomena, daughter Lois, and sons Jerry and Lindsey.

His passing is a great loss to the Filipino martial arts world! Grandmaster Largusa was the head of Kali - an ancient but existing martial arts system. It is so effective in combat that during Spain's conquest of the Philippines some Southern Philippine tribes had successfully resisted the armored might of the Spaniards for nearly four centuries.

Grandmaster Largusa is widely regarded as the final word on this devastating and deadly method of combat. Kali is a system so unique that it is said to be the source of all Eskrima styles. It could also be the only martial arts system in the Philippines and the United States where there is one Grandmaster and one Master at any given time. In other systems it is a common practice that there are several Masters, Grandmasters and even Great Grandmasters at the same time.

The very first Grandmaster in Kali was no other than Grandmaster Floro Villabrilie, the Philippines' most revered fighter and champion of numerous stick-fighting death matches. It is from the Patriarch of Kali himself that Grandmaster Largusa learned a unique blend of deadly and devastating methods, strategies and techniques in martial arts.

Grandmaster Largusa was born in Kauai in 1926 where his parents immigrated to from Carcar, Cebu, Philippines. Although he started his Filipino martial arts training from his father, his first Eskrima instructor was a Master Agustin. His training with Agustin ended when he joined the U.S. Army in 1945 during World War II.

While in the Army, Largusa trained in several fighting systems that also included Judo and boxing. Upon his discharge

from the Army in 1951, he returned to Kauai, and with the blessings of his instructor Master Agustin, he was accepted as a student of Grandmaster Villabrilie.

At the age of 25, Largusa trained one-on-one for seven consecutive years with Villabrilie, who was still in his prime then at 39 years old. At the onset of his training, Grandmaster Villabrilie had him promise to never teach anyone else the art of Kali. At the time, few people had ever heard of this deadly art because it was a closely-guarded secret that was passed only from teacher to student and from father to son.

As his years of training with Villabrilie progressed, Largusa realized that what he was learning was primarily comprised of fighting techniques and theory, and that he could not teach the system the way it was taught to him. So he broke down step-by-step and move-by-move – Grandmaster Villabrilie's complete system.

In recognition, the Kali Patriarch gave Ben T. Largusa a signed legal document designating him the sole heir to the Villabrilie method and the title of Tuhan (Master). Largusa was also authorized to add his name to Villabrilie's system of martial arts, hence it is widely known today as: Villabrilie-Largusa Kali System.

When Grandmaster Villabrilie passed away in March 8,

1992, Tuhan Largusa automatically became the second grandmaster of the Villabrille-Largusa Kali System. Upon assuming the mantle of leadership, Grandmaster Largusa was duty-bound to also select who among the officially designated Kali guros (instructors) will be the next in line.

Guro/Professor Mel Lopez of San Francisco was Grandmaster Largusa's choice! With Largusa's demise, Grandmaster Mel Lopez is the third grandmaster of the Villabrille-Largusa Kali System.

Largusa moved to San Francisco from Kauai when he was around 32 or 35 because Grandmaster Villabrille told him to train and spar with opponents of different styles. Once in the Bay Area, he met people from different Karate and Kung-Fu styles. He was invited to spar with practitioners of Choy Li Fut, Wing Chun, and Praying Mantis. Because he could easily handle the fighters, everyone thought that he trained in kung-fu, although he didn't. Villabrille's system gave him the facility to effectively deal with other martial arts styles.

I have heard that one of Largusa's constant sparring partners was a Kung Fu Sifu who claimed to be a practitioner of the "Hundred Elephant" style. Said Sifu tried numerous times to penetrate Largusa's defenses but failed. Like a master chess player, Largusa was always many moves ahead of the sifu's planned attacks.

Grandmaster Ben Largusa was the first man to bring and introduce Kali into the United States public arena. He gave America its first demonstration of Kali in 1964 at the Ed Parker International Karate Championships in Long Beach, California.

Also in attendance were numerous martial artists from around the world, including the legendary Bruce Lee, Dan Inosanto and Jhoon Rhee.

On the eve of this event, Parker gathered the top instructors of the various martial arts inside a hotel ballroom. Every instructor was given a chance to present the principles and theories of their particular system. Ben Largusa was among those presenters.

Parker decided that Bruce Lee would be the last to present. While giving the values of his Gung-fu system, Bruce Lee felt he was talking above the heads of the people present. Most of the other martial arts instructors were even baffled of what Lee was talking about.

When Lee saw what was happening, he made eye contact with most of the instructors present and pointedly commented, "It seems that most of you have no idea of what I'm talking about. It looks like Ben Largusa is the only one who understands."

On the day of the Internationals, both Bruce Lee and Ben Largusa were introduced to the American public for the very first time!

On stage, Bruce Lee demonstrated his modified form of Wing Chun Gung Fu, the precursor to Jeet Kune Do, as well as Lee's very well publicized, powerful two-inch punch. Largusa, on the other hand, demonstrated sparring using Eskrima sticks with his brother, Dominador Largusa, as his partner.

Prior to their performance, Largusa asked the audience to refrain from taking any still photos or home-movie pictures. At that time there were no video cameras

or cell phones yet. His plea fell on deaf ears because he noticed the flashing lights of several cameras, so he had to cut short his presentation.

The great Ed Parker was a martial artist with an open mind. Even way before the 1964 Karate Championships, Parker wanted to know more about the art of Kali. Largusa explained to him that Kali is not just about stick-fighting, and he proceeded to show Parker empty-hand movements and techniques. Parker was very impressed and decided that he and Largusa get together more often. Parker loved the Kali movements and footwork. They had another friend, a Choy Li Fut practitioner, on these get-togethers. When Parker decided to put on his famous Karate Internationals, he asked Largusa to demonstrate.

A few weeks after the Karate Internationals, Parker received a phone call from William Dozier, the producer of the "Batman" TV series. Ed Parker had a lot of friends in Hollywood and was teaching martial arts to some of the top people in the industry. Dozier was then planning to produce a new action TV series called "The Green Hornet." He asked Parker's assistance to help him search for a real martial artist to play the role of Kato, the Green Hornet's sidekick.

Parker called up Largusa and told him that Hollywood needed a person for that role, and he thought of two people - Ben Largusa and Bruce Lee. But he decided to offer the part to Largusa first and Bruce second. Largusa told him that he truly appreciated the offer but that he couldn't answer right then; he needed time to think. A few days later, he called

Parker back and declined the offer. Parker was disappointed that he didn't accept, but he understood. So Parker said, "I'll have to call Bruce Lee." And the rest is history.

Everyone who knew Grandmaster Ben Largusa knows that he is a very humble man. He never dreamed of using his martial arts knowledge as a way to gain fame, fortune and glory.

I and my husband first met this great yet humble man, who describes himself as "just a man of Kali" back in 1976 in one of the Filipino martial arts events in Los Angeles. We were introduced to him by our very good friend and kumpadre Dan Inosanto, another martial arts legend, who is the godfather of our youngest son, Kris.

And then in 1978, Largusa made my husband a Kali Guro when his U.S. navy ship made a port visit to San Francisco. Before we changed our martial arts school to "Babao Arnis" we called it "Kali Academy of San Diego."

In 1981, at a very special ceremony in Kauai which we attended, Grandmaster Villabrille presented then Tuhan Largusa the

"Conveyance of Life Interest", which gave Largusa the exclusive right, license and authority to use the name of Floro Villabrille School of Kali in perpetuating and promoting the Kali system. Although there were others who trained under Villabrille, it was Largusa who was chosen by Villabrille to be his successor. It was such an honor and a privilege for me to meet Grandmaster Villabrille in person! I wrote about him, and other Filipino martial artists, in some newspapers and magazines I write for through the years. One of these papers was the

San Diego Taliba (News) which I edited.

The last time we saw Grandmaster Largusa was in Los Angeles in June 18, 1993 at the very memorable event called "The City of Los Angeles Honors the Living Treasures of the Filipino Martial Arts." I remember that among the Filipino martial arts legends present, aside from Grandmaster Largusa, were the late Grandmaster Leo Giron, the late Grandmaster Sam Tendencia, the late Senior Guro Lucky Lucaylucay, Grandmaster Richard Bustillo, Guro Dan Inosanto, and Professor



At the "Living Treasures of the Filipino Martial Arts" grand event in Los Angeles, California in 1993 attended by Filipino martial artists from all over the United States.



Grandmaster Largusa holding the "San Diego Taliba (News)" which Zena edited at that time



Grandmaster Largusa with the Award of Recognition as an FMA Living Treasure



Kali heirarchy, seated L to R: Grandmaster Floro Villabrille, Kali Patriarch; Grandmaster Ben Largusa, Villabrille's successor; and Grandmaster Mel Lopez, Largusa's successor.

Greg Lontayao.

When not practicing martial arts, Grandmaster Ben Largusa's main hobby was playing his guitar. He was always on the look-out for a good guitar player or instructor from whom he could learn more. His refined ear for music was probably inspired by Grandmaster Villabrille who taught him the musical rhythm of Kali. The various beats and tempo of the

drums, the gong and the kulintang (Philippine musical instruments) can only be appreciated by a knowledgeable Kali practitioner who could use these musical beat and tempo as tools in sophisticated fighting moves.

Until now there are folk dances in the Southern part of the Philippines where the dancers' fluid movements are actually camouflaged fighting moves. It's

up to the audiences' depth of knowledge of Philippine martial arts or Philippine history to actually perceive these moves.

Grandmaster Ben T. Largusa - you are gone but not forgotten. You have left a lasting legacy to us all in the Martial Arts world! You will forever be loved and revered! Rest in peace with the Lord!!

Visit the official website of the Villabrille-Largusa Kali System and the Kali Association of America
www.villabrillegargusakali.com



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Master Christopher Ricketts

(1955 - 2010)

“A Pioneer in Full-Contact Fighting in the Philippines”

A pioneer in full-contact fighting in the Philippines, Master Christopher Ricketts is known for his high emphasis on intensive basic training and regular full-contact sparring. Training with Topher, as he is better known, is a demanding and challenging process. Seemingly tireless, given a chance, he will teach and train for hours on end, leaving his students exhausted, but definitely fulfilled and raring to fight. One of the original five pillars of Kali Ilustrisimo, Master Ricketts has produced numerous champions in the Filipino fighting arts, full-contact karate, and kick-boxing.

In 1963 Ricketts started his training in the martial arts with karate, when he met Dr. Guelermo Lengson, then the President of the Karate Federation of the Philippines, who was also an Arnis practitioner and was the one that actually taught Remy Presas Sinawali, when Remy Presas was

still in Manila. Christopher Ricketts was 13 years old at the time and witnessed Dr. Lengson teaching Remy Presas, while also training at the school. Also Christopher Ricketts trained under Jimmy Galis, who was instructing a style called ‘Spinx’ (Spanish/English) in name, but was a Filipino martial art.

Creation of Bakbakan

It was when Master Rey Galang returned from Australia, in a discussion with Christopher Ricketts, that a name was needed for their brotherhood for he wished to go international in promoting the Filipino martial arts. So it was a friend of Christopher’s who suggested since they liked sparring so much that they should call the Organization Bakbakan. At the same time Master Rey Galang also had also been thinking of the name Bakbakan Group. And so with Master Rey Galang as the Director



and Master Christopher Ricketts as the Chief Instructor, Bakbakan International was formed.

Master Christopher Ricketts has been in San Diego California relocating from the Philippines. His main goal was to share and spread the art of Ilustrisimo Kali. In the Philippines Master Ricketts made a living in teaching, but found that here in America that it was a different situation and until he could form a base of students in San Diego he had to take on a regular job to make ends meet.



Topher Ricketts training with Grandmaster Ilustrisimo



Last ‘Masters’ group picture with Edgar Sulite taken March 15, 1997
Tony Diego, Edgar Sulite, Topher Ricketts, Rey Galang and Alex Co

Photo by Steve Tarani

Master Ricketts was an excellent teacher, in that he broke the movements down with explanation, giving insight to each theory of movement. A pioneer in full-contact fighting in the Philippines, Master Christopher Ricketts was known for his high emphasis on intensive basic training and regular full-contact sparring. Training with Christopher, was a demanding and challenging process. Seemingly tireless, given a chance, he would teach and train for hours on end, leaving his students exhausted, but definitely fulfilled and raring to fight. One of the original five pillars of Kali Ilustrisimo, Master Ricketts has produced numer-

ous champions in the Filipino fighting arts, full-contact karate, and kickboxing.

Master Ricketts also offered training in boxing, experienced while in the Philippines. He trained Peter Sescon a flyweight and number one contender in the Philippines, and Junior Bantamweight, Dodong Santa Iglesia and Salvador Darlo.

Master Ricketts will be missed greatly; a true professional practitioner of the Filipino martial arts.



Learn more about Bakbakan in a past Special Edition [Click Here](#)

Read an excellent interview with Master Ricketts by David Foggie in FMA Digest Vol7 No1 [Click Here](#)

The following people are recognized by the Ricketts Family and are among the guardians of Master Topher's legacy. They fully support Master Topher's sons who are his rightful heirs in preserving and propagating the late Master's interpretation of Kali Ilustrisimo.

- Mauro Marchiori (USA)
- John Jacobo (USA)
- Dino Flores (USA)
- Rick Alexander (USA)
- David Foggie (Australia)
- Viko Perrine (Australia)

In time an updated list will be featured on www.ilustrisimo-usa.com

Great Grandmaster Ernesto Presas

[1945 - 2010]

Kombatan

Ernesto Amador Presas, Sr. was born in May of 1945 in the coastal fishing village of Hinigaran in Negros Occidental. His father José Bonco Presas, a renowned Arnis fighter in the area, began teaching Ernesto the fundamentals of Arnis at the age of eight. A capable learner, he mastered his lessons well and soon expanded his martial arts education to include the study of Judo, Jujitsu, Karate, and eventually Kendo.

In the time-tested custom of Arnis practitioners of that era, Presas trained intensely and fought many challenge matches against other practitioners. One memorable encounter in 1970 saw him facing an Arnis fighter from the Manila suburb of Paranaque, who wanted to test the skills of the upstart who had just moved to the city from a rural area. The two fought in the middle of a rice paddy, where lateral movement was severely limited, and falling into thigh-deep mud was a distinct possibility. They began with a trial to see who could disarm the other of his stick. Using his complete knowledge of levers and disarming methods, Presas successfully took the other fighter's stick away in two successive clashes. Not satisfied with this turn of events, the other fighter insisted on an all-out skirmish. Presas went on to disarm his foe once again and delivered a rain of blows that knocked his opponent into the mud.

Other fights would follow, with the frequent condition that the other fighter was always the challenger - Presas did not seek conflict, but never backed down from

it either. Because his knowledge was not limited only to combat with weapons, Presas also bested karate practitioners while fighting barehanded, including one opponent who fell into the river the two were struggling near after Presas pounded him with hard punches and kicks. These battles, he would later divulge, formed an important facet in the development of his comprehensive fighting system.

In 1972, Presas secured teaching positions as a physical education instructor at the University of Santo Tomas, the University of the Philippines, Far Eastern University, the Lyceum of the Philippines, and Central Colleges of the Philippines. He also began teaching Arnis at military and law enforcement institutions including the Philippine National Police Academy, the Far Eastern Military Academy, the General Headquarters Military Police Academy, and the Officer's Schools for the Philippine Army and Air Force.

During those formative days, the Arjuken Karate Association held classes from Monday through Saturday and also held special events and demonstrations on Sundays. Arnis classes featured basic training in groups, with students executing blocking, striking, and disarming techniques with single or double sticks. Sparring was practiced both with and without the use of protective equipment such as headgear, body armor and gloves. Equipment allowed students to make hard contact, while sparring unprotected called for more controlled action as only rattan sticks were available (the soft,

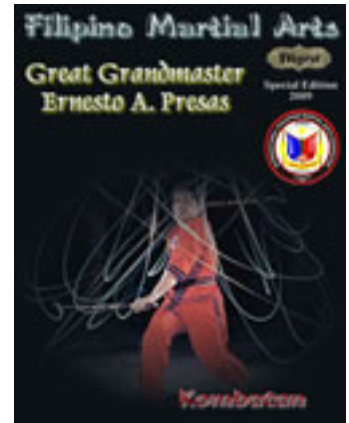


foam sticks later developed in the U.S. for training and tournaments would never gain popularity in the Philippines). Instruction on anyo (forms) and practice with bladed weapons were largely conducted on a one-on-one basis because of spaces limitations and for safety reasons.

In addition to the Arnis classes, students could learn; JKA-line Shotokan Karate, Jujitsu throwing and locking skills, Okinawan weaponry (tonfa, bo, nunchaku and sai), as well as Kendo. (There exists today, particularly in Australia and Canada, a system known as Arjuken karate, popularized by early Presas students). Presas was a firm advocate of cross-training, as he believed that this better prepared the student to deal with the greatest variety of possible attacks and weapons. Exponents of other martial arts could often be seen visiting, observing and practicing alongside the school's regular students.

Great Grandmaster Presas will greatly missed by all and remembered for his contributions to the Filipino martial arts.

Learn More about Great Grandmaster Ernesto Presas and his art of Kombatón



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Sincerely,
John R. Malmo

FMA Past Events

Philippine American Expo 2010

September 18 - 19, 2010

Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles CA.

The event kicked off Saturday with the Filipino Americans of greater Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange and Riverside county. The event was a celebration of the 25th year of continuous success of hosting the expo which helps the people to introduce new products, businesses and the recognition of people who help the community in various ways and to discover talented Filipino Americans.

The organizer was Ms. Awee Abayari of Tri Media Groups and Company that owns several businesses throughout the United States. The Philippine martial arts that is widely known as Arnis, Kali, Eskrima was the highlight of the event which the groups of Filipino martial arts practitioners participated and received recognitions.



People checking the Filipino martial arts products of Roiles Gears Ltd the manufacture and supplier of the Best Filipino products with it comes to martial arts.



Members of PAKAMUT /FMA group under Grandmaster Felix Roiles received awards of recognitions in promoting the Filipino martial arts during the event followed with a explosive demonstration of the different Filipino martial arts groups.



5th Annual MARPPPIO
Michigan Modern Arnis Seminar
September 18 - 19, 2010
Guro Ben Harrison

This year's Modern Arnis seminar with Mataas na Guro Dr. Remy P. Presas was held at the Choi Kwang Do Academy in Shelby Township, Michigan. A Special thanks to Jose Soriano Jr. Sensei of Michigan Aikido and Choi Kwang Do for allowing us the opportunity to present the Filipino Martial Art of Modern Arnis.

Many new students were present this year and new Instructors were on hand to experience the Filipino Martial Arts. Among those Instructors were Master Thorton Kelly and Kum Cha Kelly of Tiger Chung's Tae Kwon Do of Clinton Township, Jose Soriano Jr. Sensei, James Soriano, Mr. Richard Boles and Christina Boles of Choi Kwang Do of Shelby Township.

Michigan Modern Arnis Instructors were also represented by Guro Kathleen Enal, Guro Allen Henton, Guro Krista Harrison and



Guro Ben Harrison.

Saturday started out with learning some basic strikes, stick to stick, blocking and striking 1-4. We then moved into trapping and locking from the #1 and #2 strikes. Then, we moved into empty hand

against stick.

Next was Palis -Palis, with disarms and trapping with sticks, and Single Sinawali with tusok. The day finished with Guro Ben Harrison teaching variations on the 5-6-7 knife drill. Good fundamentals and introduction to the art of Modern Arnis.

Sunday was a faster paced day, beginning with Visidario empty hand block, check and counter drill with trapping and locking and takedowns. Went into stick disarms from strikes #1-#3, stick versus stick and empty hand versus stick. Dr. Presas had the students circle and each student, one by one, attacked the person in the middle, who then applied the takedown that was just taught.

Michigan Modern Arnis Instructors were given time to share their expertise of Modern Arnis with the students. Guro Kathleen Enal taught basic Sumbrada, stick versus stick, knife versus knife and empty hand versus knife. Guro Krista Harrison taught some variations of disarms #1-#3. Finally, Guro Ben Harrison taught basic sword disarms from the #1 and #2 striking positions using two hands.

The Seminar participants were also treated to techniques of "Filipino" Aikido by Jose Soriano Jr. Sensei of Michigan Aikido. We were shown redirection techniques and takedowns from three



www.modernarnis.com

angles of attacks with variations. Also, a demonstration of Choi Kwang Do by Christina Boles and Richard Boyles shared the "Brain Gym" concepts used for motivating and helping ADD and ADHD kids at his school.

All in all, we had a great time and getting insight into the Filipino Martial Art of Modern Arnis. We are already looking forward to next year's seminar with Dr. Presas.





September 18, 2010



September 19, 2010

Michigan Modern Arnis Schools

Guro Ben Harrison

Michigan Modern Arnis, 11860 Wheaton Drive, Sterling Heights, MI 48313
(586) 739-0497 - **Email:** guroben@modernarnis.com / **Website:** www.michiganmodernarnis.com

Master Thorton Kelly

Tiger Chung's Tae Kwon Do, 36543 Gratiot, Clinton Township, MI 48035
(586) 778-1505 - **Email:** trk1st@yahoo.com / **Website:** www.tigerchung.com

Sensei Jose Soriano Jr.

Michigan Aikido, 51500 Schoenherr, Shelby Township, MI 48315
(248) 730-4566 - **Email:** michiganaikido6159@yahoo.com / **Website:** www.aikidomi.com

5th Arizona FMA Friendship Gathering

October 23 and 24, 2010

Margaret T. Hance Park, Phoenix, AZ.

By Michael Butz

It's been a week since the 5th Gathering and I find myself sitting in front of the computer staring at a blank "page", unable to pull out of my mind what I wish to see on the screen. Normally, I just give a black and white outline of the gathering. I list the instructors and their respective styles, give "Thank you's" to any special guests that may have shown up and then summarize what went on during the event.

So I'm surfing the 'net to take a break from my literary ordeal and I find a post in one of the online forums I happen to frequent. It's written by Mr. James Laforteza, a resident of Phoenix, AZ. I have reprinted it here, with his permission:

"A wonderful thing...

Just wanted to share that I recently attended two days worth of Filipino martial arts seminars and training that improved my "skills" a thousand fold. Truth-be-told, it's one of the best weekends I've ever had with the Filipino martial arts.

Last Saturday, I attended a seminar being held here in Arizona by Master Ron Saturno, of Serrada fame. His seminar was about Hilot (acupressure and pressure points) and the applications of it in the Filipino martial arts. He was explaining how through learning even basic aspects of Hilot, one can be a much better striker than someone who does not know. He said and I quote, "*You can be a butcher and*



Master Ron Saturno - Hilot

that's fine, but wouldn't it be nicer to be a surgeon?"

With diagrams and demonstrations on a live person, he showed that by attacking certain "healing points" in the body, one can knockout, disarm, or render someone utterly defenseless. I was just amazed on Master Saturno's speed and accuracy. Later on that seminar, he went through some basic Serrada movements that are proven ef-



Master Ron Saturno - Serrada

fective in a situation where you needed to take someone out fast.

Sunday was even more of a

surprise for me. The annual Filipino martial arts gathering, was attended by numerous people of different schools, something of which I appreciated. We were graced by the presence of Master Sam Buot of Balintawak fame. He was demonstrating the basic strikes, blocks and counters of Balintawak, and the Filipino martial arts I wanted to learn for some time now. Through patient trial and error I managed to learn some of Balintawak's basics



Master Sam Buot of Balintawak

and was very satisfied by it. After a quick lunch, Master Ron Saturno again applied his Serrada knowledge and expertise and demonstrated a variety of blocks and attacks that [were] both simple, yet highly effective. It was truly a great day.

I can honestly say that I learned a lot about the Filipino martial arts those past few days. Master Ron even said that I was doing well and that I should keep up my pursuit of learning Serrada (I dream of becoming a good Serrada student). I give thanks to Mike Butz who helped set up these

wonderful events (thanks for taking care of my elbow and the hitting lessons), the Inayan students that came all the way down from San Jose, thanks for playing with me and most of all, everyone who participated in the gathering. We may all be different, but we were all united that day. It's a wonderful thing.

James'

Thank you, Master Sam Buot and Master Ron Saturno for your time, your openness and your passion for teaching the Filipino martial arts. Thank you to everyone who attended the Gathering. A special thank you to Master Gilbert Cordoncillo and Mr. Moses Quintero from Salinas, CA. and Mr. Hai Phan and Ms. Leticia Trejo from San Jose, CA. for going out of your respective ways to attend the event. Thank you, James, for your informative and inspirational post. To paraphrase what you said at the end - We may practice different styles but we were all just Filipino martial artists that day. This is exactly the spirit behind the Gathering.



Michael Butz

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Voices of the Masters: *Warrior Arts of the Philippines*

Taking a comprehensive look at an entire martial art and the culture and tradition behind it is a daunting task. Punong Guro Myrlino P. Hufana decided to take on the challenge when one of his students, independent filmmaker Barclay Powers approached Hufana in early 2010 about traveling to the Philippines to meet with and film several highly respected masters. By March 2010, Hufana and a film crew had arrived in the Philippines, ready to document the rich history and the promising future of the Filipino martial arts with *Voices of the Masters: Warrior Arts of the Philippines*.

The *Voices of the Masters* project came together much faster than most films, thanks to a supportive community - the Hufana Traditional Arnis (HTAI) family and a passionate film crew.

At the time, Hufana was also working with Powers on another film titled *Killing the Buddha: The Lost Secret of Immortality*. Hufana is also featured in the *Killing the Buddha* motion



Punong Guro Myrlino P. Hufana

comic, a bestseller on iTunes.

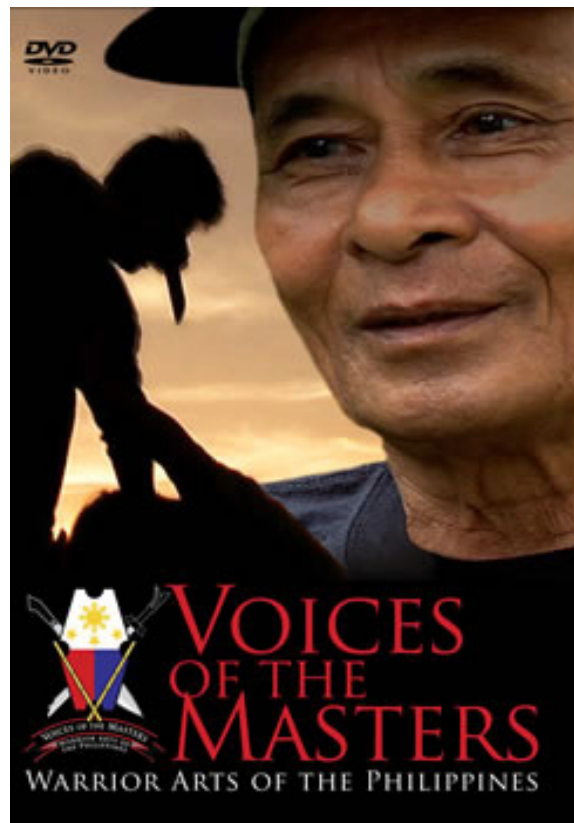
Hufana has created the first of what will become a series of Filipino Martial Arts instructional applications that are now available at the iTunes App Store entitled: **Weapon Arts 1: Filipino Combat Stick Fighting**.

Hufana has also been propagating the Filipino martial arts through seminars around the United States for nearly 15 years, as well as teaching Filipino martial arts at his school, the Bellevue Martial Arts Academy, located in Bellevue, Wash. Hufana is currently teaching more than 75 students in Washington State alone.

Brett McGinnis of Wenatchee, Wash.-based M & M Productions flew to the Philippines to film *Voices of the Masters*. “What I liked about making *Voices of the Masters* was that this project was about preserving a culture and not simply selling a product,” McGinnis said.

The purpose of *Voices of the Masters* is to propagate, promote, and preserve the Filipino martial arts. No films of this scale or quality have been made before and as many grandmasters age, the importance and urgency of recording their unique styles became clear, Hufana said.

The trip to the Philippines was over 6,500 miles, and the grueling schedule did not slow down once the plane touched the ground. “We were in the Philippines filming for three long weeks,



filming from morning until night most of the days we were there,” McGinnis said.

Although the political environment in the Philippines has been somewhat shaky in the recent past, McGinnis said he felt safe and appreciated by the local people for the work the *Voices of the Masters* crew was doing.

“I usually felt very welcome. I believe the Filipino people really appreciated the work we were doing to preserve their history. I met several government officials during my stay and never noticed any volatile environments at any time. When we were in Mindanao we had a Strike Force Team escort us through the jungles and anytime we were out of ‘safe zones’. Traveling with guys carrying machine guns and rocket launchers was definitely a little unnerving but they were a great group,” McGinnis said.



Grandmaster Rodrigo Maranga and son Rico



Grandmaster Bob Pepino Instructor of the Cebu SWAT



Grandmaster Jerry dela Cruz teaching at the Arnis Village

The honorable mission of the film helped the film crew feel safe and welcome in the Philippines. Hufana, his family, and the HTAI community are hoping that Voices of the Masters will help increase awareness of the martial art and sport both in the Philippines and around the world. Arnis recently became the national sport and martial art of the Philippines, so now is the perfect time for a film like Voices of the Masters, Hufana said. The film seeks to promote the Filipino martial arts as a whole, and not one particular person or organization. “We wanted to represent the whole Filipino martial arts and promote the entire umbrella of the art. We respect

them all and we are proud of them all,” he said.

Filipino martial arts enthusiasts have previously been able to find content on their sport in several books, short films, and magazines. However, Voices of the Masters is the first feature-length film to chronicle all of this, bringing together a wide variety of styles, practitioners, and philosophies.

McGinnis, while not a martial artist himself, said he gained an appreciation for the history and culture of the Filipino martial arts. He said that traveling all over the Philippine Islands with Hufana gave him and the crew an insider’s look into Filipino martial arts culture.

“Myrlino is a Filipino martial arts celebrity so we got access to places and people a normal tourist would never see. He is a humble guy and he really poured his heart into this film project. I respect the fact he cares so much about it. It was easy for me to want to do the same. I know Myrlino enriched the

experience just by being a local. Your traveling experience is greatly enhanced when you are with someone that is from the area. He knew where and where not to go,” McGinnis said.

Hufana agreed with McGinnis, saying everyone involved in making and acting in Voices of the Masters is passionate about the propagation and preservation of FMA traditions and techniques. As the Filipino martial arts gains popularity around the world, it is important to understand the traditions and cultures behind the combat art, Hufana said, and that is a main goal of the Voices of the Masters project.

Also involved in Voices of the Masters are Hufana’s two children and longtime students: Michael Hufana, 22, and Lizelle Hufana, 21. Both Michael and Lizelle are instructors at the Bellevue Martial Arts Academy and are featured in Voices of the Masters.

Hufana and his children are excited about the opportunity to show their combat art to those with an interest in martial arts, as well as expose the Filipino martial arts to people who may be unfamiliar with the sport. Michael wants Filipinos to see Voices of the



Butterfly knife maker in the legendary town of Balisong, Batangas

Masters: *"I think that Filipinos are obligated to know about our national martial art; Japan has Karate, Korea has Taekwondo, Filipino martial arts is our sport and our art,"* he said. Michael and Lizelle both cited connecting with their Filipino culture as a major part of their interest in pursuing the Filipino martial arts (both are first degree black belts in HTAI Arnis and third degree black belts in Traditional Taekwondo).

Lizelle feels that an often-overlooked group in the world of martial arts can benefit from seeing the movie and learning about the Filipino martial arts. *"I think that women can really gain a lot from seeing the movie and from getting involved in the Filipino martial arts. It's great for building confidence and discipline,"* she said.

"This is the first time the Filipino martial arts, has been in a well-produced movie," Michael said. *"I think Voices of the Masters will really do a great job with letting people know that the Philippines have a martial art, too."*

McGinnis shares the views

of Michael Hufana, saying that while many short videos have been made showing Filipino martial arts techniques and styles, most are made by amateur filmmakers and lack the quality necessary to bring the Filipino martial arts to a large audience. Everyone involved in filming and producing *Voices of the Masters* believes they have created a film that pays respect to all aspects and styles of the Filipino martial arts and honors the Grandmasters and Masters.

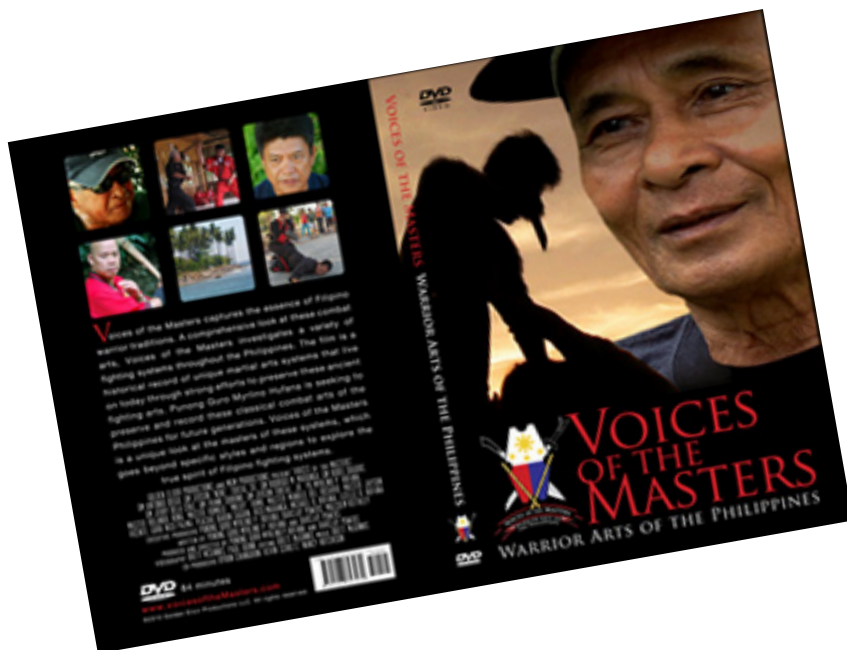
Something viewers from the United States may notice while watching *Voices of the Masters* is the attitudes of the masters. *"I was amazed at how humble the masters were. Americans beat their chest when they are good at something. Filipinos sometimes are somewhat reserved about their success and accomplishments,"* McGinnis commented. *"I never turned down a local beer with an FMA Master."*

Hufana started the World Filipino Martial Arts Association (WFMAA) in 2003 with the goal



VOTM Film Crew
Paul Quinn and Brett McGinnis

of promoting open communication, appreciation, and respect between leaders in order to develop a stronger Filipino martial arts around the world. However, Hufana said a unified association seems unlikely because of the temperament, nature, pride, culture, and tradition of the Filipinos. Hufana remains positive about the future of the Filipino martial arts, and his hope is reinforced by the *Voices of the Masters* project. The goal of the movie and the WFMAA is to encourage a brotherhood between leaders and practitioners of all styles of the Filipino martial arts, not to homogenize the combat art or to say that one system is the best.



Voices of the Masters is the first feature-length film that captures the magic of the Filipino Martial Arts. The film will be available for purchase as a download, on DVD, and Pay-Per-View. Learn more about the film and where to see it at:

VoicesoftheMasters.com



VoicesoftheMasters.com

FMA Digest Note:

Voices of the Masters (Warrior Arts of the Philippines) is the new wave in learning about the Filipino martial arts. The FMA Digest has been a source of the Filipino martial arts for the last 7 years in its promotion and promulgation of the Filipino martial arts and the Philippine culture.

However in the publishing of Voices of the Masters the promotion and promulgation of the Filipino martial arts and the Philippine culture reaches beyond what anyone can read. To actually, being able to see and hear what the Masters of the Filipino martial arts in their own cultural setting are saying and feeling that they are right there in front of you is to say the least inspiring, motivating, and brings reality to the forefront.

The DVD Voices of the Masters has been put together in a most professional manner; not only bring forth information in general about the Masters interviewed and their styles, but also there is a sense of a personal touch as if you are right there with them hearing from them personally their thoughts and fully understanding the attitude for the love of the Filipino martial arts that they have trained, taught and promoted throughout their lives.

It is most highly recommended to obtain this DVD and experience this awe-inspiring reality that has brought the Masters of the Philippines to you in a manner that one will not forget. There has not been any documentary that can compare with Voices of the Masters DVD.

Punong Guro Myrlino P. Hufana along with his crew has done an exceptional job in bring forth this most outstanding documentary and it is hoped that he will bring forth more in the future.

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