

# Filipino Martial Arts

Digest

Mini Issue  
2008

## World of FMA

June 7, 2008  
San Pablo, CA



*Grandmaster Max Pallen  
Grandmaster Alfred Bandalan  
Dr. Remy Presas  
Grandmaster Vincent Cabales*

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## **From the Publishers Desk**

### **Kumusta**

This event which was the work of MARRIPO was a put together last minute seminar. Another seminar was scheduled and when cancelled Dr. Remy Presas called on Grandmasters Max Pallen, Alfredo Bandalan, and Vincent Cabales for a last minute get together and share their arts with other practitioners. Originally a two day affair, unfortunately ending in only a single day of gaining knowledge in these arts, due to schedules, was a gathering of history in the making.

As was noted; by Master Patrick Armijo who took the floor for a short while when Grandmaster Vincent Cabales was being interviewed on camera by television news anchor Steve Angeles from ABS-CBN, TFC (The Filipino Channel).

The seminar was a one of a kind event. An interesting association of some of the most noted Filipino Martial arts Grandmasters took place that day. The roots of each Grandmaster were parallel or have crossed paths. Grandmaster Master Alfredo Bandalan was once a student of Grandmaster Angel Cabales and Master Mike Inay. Grandmaster Max Pallen was largely responsible for bringing Grandmaster Remy A. Presas to the United States. He also trained extensively with Grandmaster Remy Presas. Grandmaster Presas lived with the Pallens when he was in the San Francisco Bay area. Grandmaster Vincent Cabales and Dr. Remy P. Presas both had fathers who were martial arts legends. When their fathers passed away they both stepped up to carry on the family art as is expected of the eldest son.

When Supreme Grandmaster Diony Canete came to the United States, last fall, he met both Grandmaster Vincent Cabales and Dr. Remy Presas. Supreme Grandmaster Diony gave a speech and said that he was honored to have the Grandmaster of Modern Arnis, Dr. Remy Presas, and the Grandmaster of Cabales Serrada Escrima, Vincent Cabales, present. He said that Doce Pares, Modern Arnis and Cabales Serrada Escrima represent three of the most legitimate forms of Filipino Martial Arts. Supreme Grandmaster Diony said that he personally knew Grandmaster Angel Cabales and Grandmaster Remy Amador Presas and that he recognizes the sons of these legends as the legitimate Grandmasters and heirs of their respective systems.

So though this issue took a while in getting it together, please enjoy.

**Maraming Salamat Po**

## **The World of FMA**

San Pablo, CA

June 7, 2008

By Ramon Lazo

The World of FMA is a MARPPPIO event that featured four leading Filipino Martial Arts Grandmasters, each representing a different system. The presenters included the following (who presented in this order): Grandmaster Max Pallen of Senkotiros, Grandmaster Fred Bandalan from Doce Pares, Dr. Remy P. Presas Jr., leader of MARPPPIO Modern Arnis who sponsored the event and at the end of the day, Grandmaster Vincent Cabales of Cabales Serrada Eskrima.

As far as I know, this was the first time on the West Coast where four leading Grandmasters of different Filipino martial arts styles agreed to come together and appear at a seminar. The event came together very quickly because of a last minute cancellation of another MARPPPIO event. The World of FMA event was quickly conceptualized to replace the cancellation. The Grandmasters were called to see if they would participate and each one graciously contributed their time, energy and good spirits to make sure this event would be a success and that each of the students would all come away with something related to their style Filipino martial arts. It certainly was an event that displayed unity in purpose and diversity within the Filipino culture, a notion that MARPPPIO wanted to support as the undercurrent for the weekend.

### **The Event Commences (9am)**



The doors opened at 8:45am and students slowly trickled into the studio. Quickly, one got the sense that the schedule and tempo for this event would be strictly on PT (Pilipino time). Part of the reason is the long drive many students had to make in order to participate in the seminar. As is common with multi-style martial arts events, students primarily from the different styles comprised nearly all of the attendees. They came from all over Northern California: Hollister, Gilroy, Alameda, San Leandro, San Francisco, San Jose area. Eventually, enough students showed up to begin a class and Grandmaster Max Pallen of Senkotiros was the first up.

### **Senkotiros**

Grandmaster Max Pallen was introduced to the class by Dr. Remy Presas Jr. Grandmaster Pallen began by talking about the history of Senkotiros and how Modern Arnis and Grandmaster Remy Presas Sr., was instrumental in the early development of Filipino martial arts in the United States. Grandmaster Pallen was accompanied by a few students from his system whom; he employed as sparring partners to demonstrate Senkotiros stick technique.

Grandmaster Pallen emphasized that the stick or cane



should be considered as an extension of the hand and arm - anything that one can do with the hand, one can also do with the stick. Later, he demonstrated the five principal strikes that comprise the Senkotiros system (Senkotiros in Tagalog literally means 5 strikes) and showed how one could use these movements in combinations that would create effective offensive and defensive technique.



I was impressed by Grandmaster Pallen's ability to literally 'weave' the stick into movement that also had a fluidity and underlying purpose to it. Each student paired with another and were shown moves that they would try on their own. Grandmaster Pallen was patient and helpful as he showed how to make the moves simpler with instructions on how to find 'entrances' into the response and quick hand manipulations to control the opponent's stick.

Eventually Grandmaster Pallen showed the students a series of stick movements in a certain specific order as a response to a #1 stick strike. The reason for this was to show that stick movements can be used in any order to create responses that the arnisador can (because of the knowledge of basic strikes and positions) create at will.





The class concluded with a demonstration of the same stick techniques with a bolo, a short sword or machete, with one of his students. This showed that the stick not only is an extension of the hand but is also a replacement for a blade or sword. Grandmaster Pallen and his student squared off and demonstrated swordplay with ease and aplomb.

A brief lunch break followed Grandmaster Pallen's class. This gave the students and instructors a chance to relax and to exchange information with each other about their various styles. It definitely was a very cool hang and is one of the things that I look forward to when I attend these seminars.



## **2pm: Time for Doce Pares**

After the brief lunch break, Grandmaster Fred Bandalan of Doce Pares system to the mat for his session. Grandmaster Bandalan is the founder of Bandalan Doce Pares Eskrima and has been a member of the Doce Pares group since the late 1970's. It was great to finally take a class from the man who I first saw appear in a 1979 BBC Documentary on Filipino Martial Arts (the series, called 'Way of The Warrior' was a BBC documentary series that featured 7 different martial arts. This documentary was a mini-series format that featured a different martial over 7 one hour segments. It is available on Internet for viewing at: **Click Here**. He was a much younger man in the documentary, but at age (how old is he??), still exhibits the spirit and flow of that time.

Realizing that many of the seminar attendees are new to Doce Pares, Grandmaster Bandalan demonstrated the 7 basic strikes of Doce Pares style. He led the class through a series of floor exercises and taught the students a mnemonic device as a way to remember these strikes. As a seminar clinician, Grandmaster Bandalan is engaging, intelligent and exudes a tremendous presence in front of large groups. This helped to make the seminar



interesting and fun.

Eventually "Mang" Fred ("Mang" is the shortening of the Tagalog word "manong" which means uncle and usually refers to an elder Filipino) demonstrated the basis for the Doce Pares lighting strike techniques by showing the students an exercise where they would respond to a single strike by responding with multiple strikes anywhere that it is open and available on the opponent's body. This was a great way to learn how to 'shadow box' Filipino martial arts style. This is a very simple exercise but teaches the student opportunities for strikes by responding to any available opening to them at the time of engagement.

Finally, Mang Fred concluded the class by showing us how to incorporate a Judo style wrist throw after blocking a #1 strike. Many bodies spun through the air as Mang Fred showed proof that combining Filipino martial arts style technique with other martial arts styles is possible. Later he demonstrated the same technique in double time with some of his Doce Pares students. This time, he used a folding fan to block the attackers and spin them in the air. He finished by throwing the fans open at the same time that the bodies hit the ground. Each time he flipped open the fans it was followed by a majestic crack that filled the dojo. Quite an impressive Gung-fu style display of an Filipino martial arts technique.







A short break followed Grandmaster Bandalan's class and at this time, a news crew from TFC (The Filipino Channel) Balitang America show came to visit. Someone from MARPPIO had alerted this cable news show about the World of FMA Seminar. The crew were beginning to interview the presenters and some of the students. This is a good bonus to the event because it meant TV exposure for everyone including World of FMA.

**(To See and Hear the Interview - [Click Here](#))**

## Modern Arnis

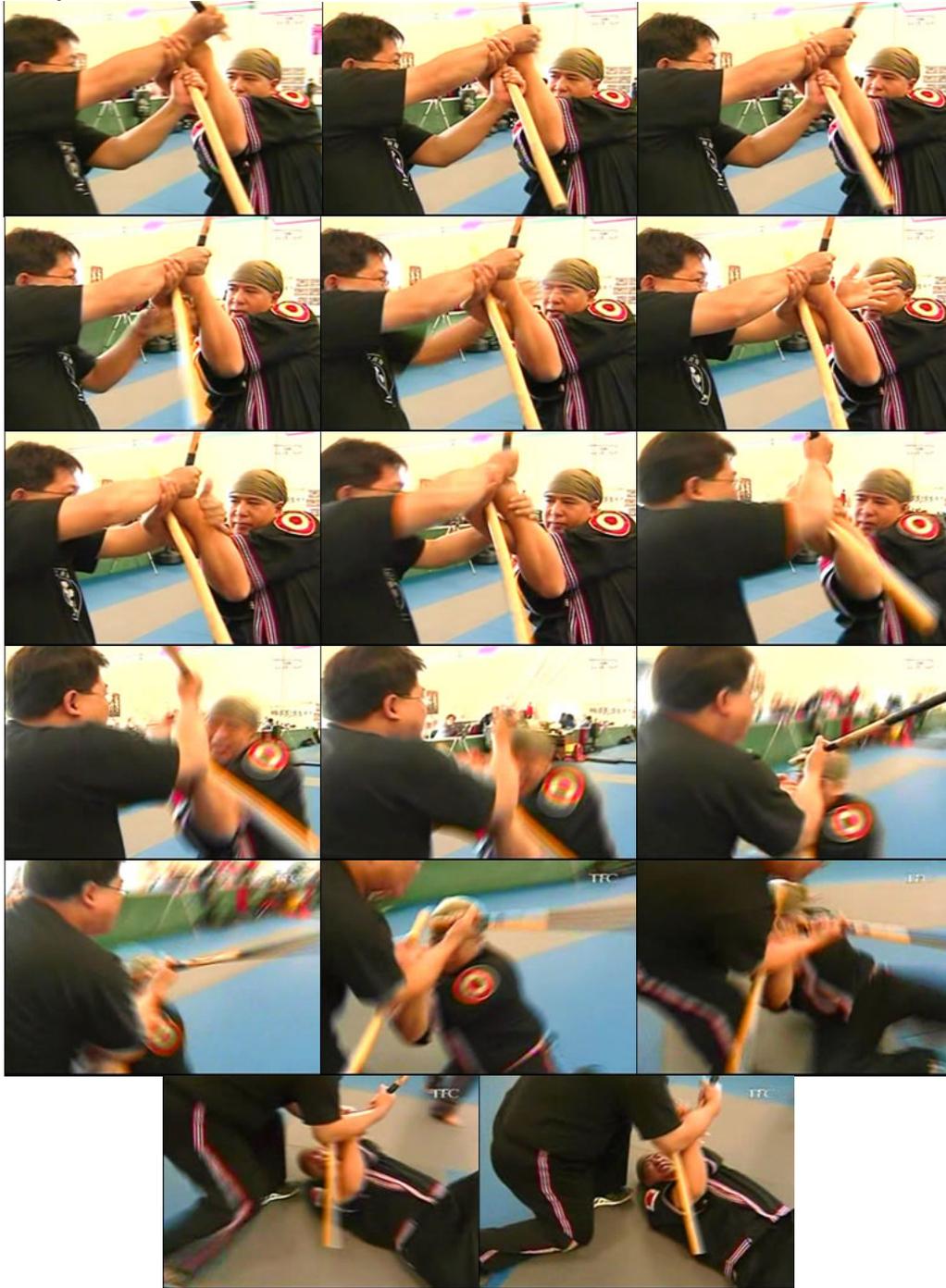


The seminar continued with Dr. Remy Presas Jr. showing his brilliant Modern Arnis locking and trapping technique. His seminar segment was complementary to the previous presentations because it showed yet another way that Filipino martial arts could be used in response to attacks. For example, he demonstrated ways to tie someone up from a #1 strike. Inevitably, the opponent would lose the use of both of

his hands and end up in submission. These are sophisticated and to the untrained person, seems almost magical. Assisting Dr. Presas' were a few of his students who showed newcomers how it's done. After a couple of tries, most students began to understand how simple it was to get into the submission hold - apparently it has to do with the way to 'bait' someone into grabbing one of your hands and then quickly bring the other arm one underneath the first in order to tie them up into what amounts to a human pretzel position.

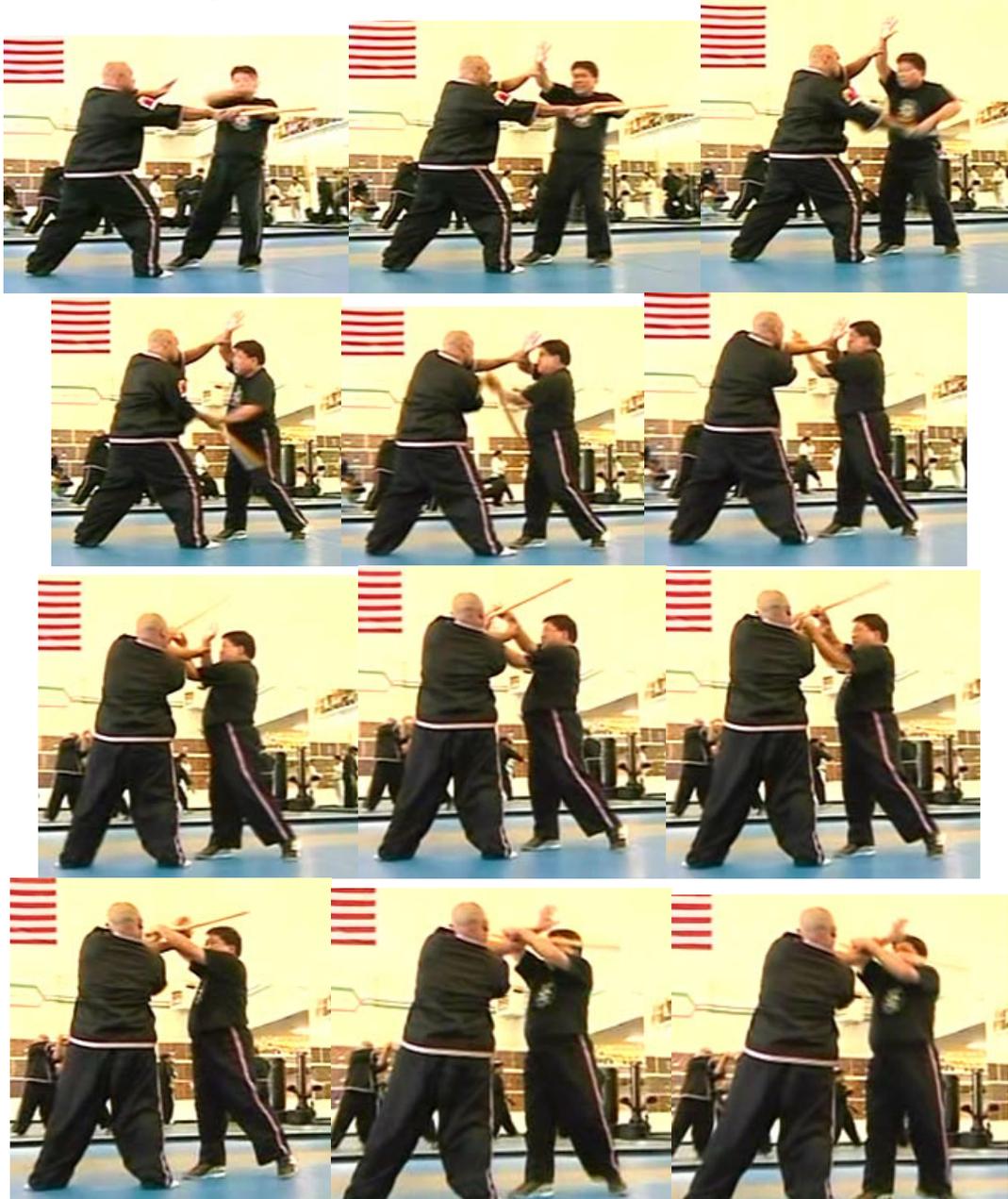
The guy goes down RIGHT AWAY and really, there is on counter to this position once you end up in it.

**Dr. Remy Presas in-close take down**



Dr. Presas has been working on this set of techniques extensively over the past few years. He calls it Visidario and has quickly become a signature of sorts for MARPPPIO modern arnis. The one that Dr. Presas demonstrated was just one of possibly

dozens of ways to lock people up as a response to an attack. The response is fluid, simple and effective. Unfortunately it is very, very painful. There seems to be a perception that Filipino martial arts is purely stick-fighting and (to some extent) knife technique (with the Kali branches of Filipino martial arts). What I saw and experienced this day showed me that Filipino martial arts can go beyond the stick and knife and move on to something much more practical with the empty hand and grappling response to an attack. Dr. Presas continues the work to add to his current repertoire of techniques and promises in the future to explore groundwork (Dumog), extensive exploration of knife defense, Sikaran (the Filipino kicking art) and extensive additions to the empty hand technique (what he calls Siniwali boxing and others call Hubad-Lubad).



At this point, the TFC crew wanted more action footage from the presenters. So during the brief break between Dr. Presas and the next presenter, TFC asked them to demonstrate individually in front of the camera. So, what followed was a type of 'best of seminar demonstration. For the next half hour we sat down and watched as all of the Grandmasters demonstrated their technique to the TFC camera. First up Grandmaster Max Pallen who once again repeated his earlier demonstration to stick attack responses. This was fluidity and control at it's best as Grandmaster Pallen squared off (with a smile, no less) with one of this advanced students for the camera. Next was Mang Fred as he once again showed attack response technique with a fan that ended in a Judo style throw. Mang Fred is diminutive in stature and the sight of him turning his students (both of whom were over 6 feet tall) in the air was almost comical - imagine Yoda but dressed in a blazing red Doce Pares uniform and holding a fan, no less.

## Cabales Serrada



The final presenter in front of the camera was a very brief demonstration of Cabales Serrada technique by the final presenter, Grandmaster Vincent Cabales who squared off with one of his advanced students. Cabales Serrada style uses a stick that is 24 inches in length (which is 2 to 4 inches shorter than the typical Filipino martial arts rattan stick). Cabales Serrada style is being taught to members of the local police departments who find that

single stick technique translates very well to the typical baton that most officers carry when walking the neighborhood beat.

Grandmaster Cabales showed the trademark Serrada quick strike method against another stick that ended up in a disarm and submission. He too displayed fluidity and precision when moving from weaponry to the empty hand locking. Grandmaster Cabales in particular showed flourishes of gung-fu in his application of the techniques. What is misleading is that beneath that fluidity is an intrinsic power in the strike and is a hallmark of the style created by his father the late Angel Cabales.





For example, one of the seminar participants mentioned to me that a solid oak stick that he used against a defense that Grandmaster Cabales showed him had been hit so hard and with such fluidity that he reckoned that his stick might have been broken at the moment. The strike had surprised him because the actual move didn't seem like much of anything - just a simple parry with the short stick. But this participant felt something visceral and powerful with the strike, but his oak stick showed no signs of breakage. Later, within a few weeks, his oak stick, one that he had been using carefully for years at his dojo, had shattered. On closer examination it seemed as if the stick had broken internally and took a while to spread before finally splitting.



Grandmaster Vincent Cabales is a very soft-spoken and humble gentleman who represents the legacy of a style that is the foundation for a few different types of Filipino martial arts (one of the styles being Inosanto style Kali/FMA). Apparently, he doesn't do

too many seminars and this was one of the few appearances he's made during the last couple of years. We were all lucky to see and actually learn from a direct descendant of the creator of the Cables Serrada style.

### **5:00 PM Presentations**

It was getting close to 5pm and the presenters assembled at the center of the mat and made their final address. Each one spoke openly about how they were all happy to see a large number of young people who came to the seminar. This gave them hope that their arts would continue to thrive and propagate and that as one of the presenters said, would now be in our hands. After the address, as a sign of gratitude, the presenters gave the students a certificate of participation that they all had signed. I'm sure this certificate will find a wall space on everyone of the students, for it is a rare thing to have four Grandmasters of the Filipino martial arts signed something such as this.



### **Closing**

In closing, I would like to say that the World of FMA was a marvelous event and such a thing is something that ought to happen all the time. It's nice to see so many Filipino martial arts styles represented at one event where everyone is getting along so well. I believe that the Filipino martial arts can truly represent the best of Filipino culture (emphasis on CULTURE). The controversies that surrounds, Filipino martial arts which involve issues about leadership and ownership of a system simply make the growth of these arts more difficult. It is well-known that most Filipino martial arts enthusiasts outside of the Philippines are non-Filipinos and that those groups find tremendous value in the arts and likely don't care one way or the other about the controversies. They see the FMA for what it truly is - a magnificent martial art that is weapons based, easy to learn and is adaptable to other martial arts. This is the way we should all perceive the Filipino martial arts and leave all of the consternation and grief behind.

MARPPPIO plans to have World of FMA2 in 2009. Date and schedule at this time is undetermined. For more information, go to [www.modernarnis.com](http://www.modernarnis.com). Please stay tuned.

## Professor Max Pallen



Professor Max Pallen was born and raised in the province of Camarines Sur, in Bicol Region, located at the Southern part of Luzon in the Philippines. He was first exposed to the Filipino martial arts at the tender age of six by his Grandfather Luis Moratillo. His father, Zacarias “Kid Baron” Pallen also exposed him to the art of “Panuntukan”. His experience in street fighting goes back to his younger years in the Philippines.

Professor Max Pallen was a young engineering student in the University of Nueva Caceres in Naga City, Camarines Sur in the Philippines. In 1959, his father thought that it would help him develop a more prosperous future by sending him to Honolulu, Hawaii, but Max decided to go to California one year later.

At the beginning it was all hard times for young Professor Pallen, working side by side in the field with the “Manongs” (senior Filipino workers) on the farm. Fortunately, a year after, in 1961, Max was able to find a permanent job in Oakland, California. While hanging out at the West Lake Bowl billiard room section, he met a combat jujitsu instructor who began instructing him in the combat style of self-defense. In addition, Professor Pallen continued his interest with other styles of martial arts. Looking for a stronger foundation and cultural identity, he decided to return to the Philippines to study and research Philippine martial arts. Professor Pallen also had the opportunity to study here in the United States under several Kali, Arnis and Eskrima Masters. He was a certified Guro (Instructor) in Kali Villabrille system until he thought it was time to move on after 5 years. Today, his quest for Philippine martial arts skills continues through his travel to Luzon, Visaya and Mindanao in the Philippines.

### Learn More about Grandmaster Pallen and Senkotiros:

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## **Grandmaster Alfredo Bandalan Sr.**



Grandmaster Alfredo Bandalan, Sr. was born in Hawaii on the Island of Lanai in 1939. His introduction to Eskrima came at the hands of his Grandfather Pedro Blanko who was from Mandawi, Cebu. Although his Grandfather never actually taught him Eskrima, feeling it too dangerous an art, Grandmaster Bandalan did catch glimpses of his grandfather's Eskrima style during demonstrations at family gatherings and when he played childish pranks on his Grandfather.

In 1958, Grandmaster Bandalan graduated from Honolulu City College. He started working for the Honolulu Welding Co. when he met his first martial arts teacher, Master Philip Doseo of Kajukenbo with the Four Leaf Clover patch. In 1968 Grandmaster Bandalan migrated to San Jose, California where he continued his martial arts training under the guidance of Chief Instructor Sam Brown of the Black Ram school, receiving his Brown Black Belt.

In 1975, he met Grandmaster Angel Cabales in Livingston, California and trained with him and Guro Mike Inay. He had continued his training in Hawaiian Kenpo, and in 1975, Professor Marino Tiwanak awarded him his Black Belt. Professor Tiwanak received his Black Belt from Adriano Emperado one of the Founders of Kajukenbo. In 1976, Professor Tiwanak, Founder of the Central Hawaiian Activities III (C.H.A. III.), awarded Grandmaster Bandalan his Chief Instructor ranking and designated him head of the San Jose Chapter of C.H.A. III Kenpo.

During the early 70's, Grandmaster Bandalan was recruited to teach Kenpo for the San Jose Parks and Recreation. He taught at the Alum Rock, Almaden, South Side, and Morgan Hill Parks, plus the Camden Community Center.

During this time Grandmaster Bandalan felt that Eskrima in America was limited. Early in 1977, Grandmaster Bandalan wrote to the Philippines asking for information on Eskrima. His letter was forwarded to Doce Pares and he received his first reply from Grandmaster Cacoy Canete. Within a month Grandmaster Diony Canete arrived in San Jose, California and Grandmaster Bandalan received his first training in Doce Pares.

Later that year, Grandmaster Bandalan flew to Cebu and was greeted by all the Doce Pares Masters. Grandmaster Bandalan was fortunate to be allowed to see the book of Doce Pares. Later, Grandmaster Bandalan was invited to, and attended, the 50th Anniversary of Doce Pares. This was documented in a special BBC television documentary of Doce Pares.

For twenty years, Grandmaster Bandalan along with his son Alfredo Bandalan Jr. trained with Cacoy and Diony Canete. Grandmaster Bandalan eventually becoming Cacoy Canete's demo partner. In 1981, Grandmaster Bandalan was granted permission, by Grandmaster Diony Canete, to name his school, Bandalan Doce Pares, thus becoming the first Hawaiian/Filipino to be accepted into the Doce Pares. He was also honored to be one of the first practitioners in the U.S to receive his affiliation papers from Doce Pares. Grandmaster Bandalan also became President of the United States Arnis, Kali, Eskrima

Federation, affiliated with National Arnis of the Philippines (NARAPHIL), and later a Founding member of World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF).

Grandmaster Bandalan is considered the Doce Pares original Founding member here in the United States and knows the history of Doce Pares in depth.

Grandmaster Bandalan is available throughout the year to conduct seminars and private training sessions.



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

### **Warriors of Visayas Ordiniza Filipino Martial Arts**

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### **Dr. Remy Presas Jr.**



Living in Quiapo, Manila and before Grandmaster Presas left for the United States, promulgating Modern Arnis at the school when other instructors were not around Grandmaster Presas would work out with his son Remy Jr., certain things he would practice with Remy Jr. that he did not with others. Grandmaster Presas had thoughts that if he showed everything to others he would be challenged later on. So there were things that were kept to himself or were shared only with family.

Even though Remy Jr. was young he was in actuality the first student of Modern Arnis, and the first black belt. Often Grandmaster Presas would wake Remy Jr. from sleeping at night saying, "I want to try something."

When Remy Presas Jr was in the 5th grade, his father Grandmaster Remy Presas Sr. left the Philippines on the invitation of Grandmaster Max Pallen of Senkotiros. The school still open, Remy Jr. would train with Jerry Dela Cruz, and then once Jerry Dela Cruz moved away, Rosemary Presas the wife of Grandmaster Presas would have Remy Jr. work out with Rodel Dagooc. However during this time martial arts was secondary and academics in the family was primary, this, the rule of Rosemary Presas. But even though dedicated to his schooling Remy Jr. would continue to train.

It was in 2001 that Dr. Remy Presas Jr. finally fully dedicated himself to teaching the art of Modern Arnis. During his fathers final days, he and his father spoke and Grandmaster Presas wanted his son to continue the leadership in promoting the family art of Modern Arnis.

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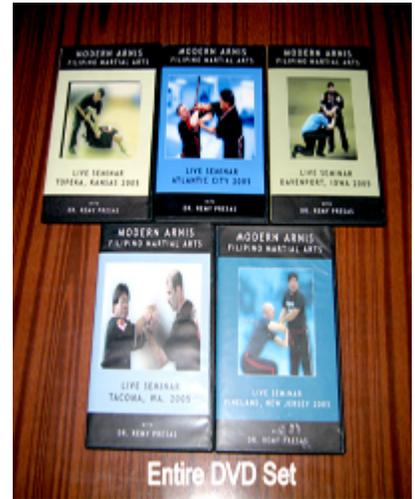
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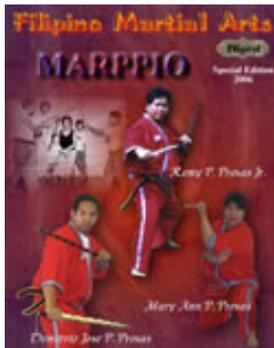


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## Grandmaster Vincent Cabales



Grandmaster Vincent Cabales it is noted that he is a quiet humble person. However he is upfront, to the point and honest when he speaks. In the past it was rumored that Vincent Cabales learned escrima after his father Grandmaster Angel Cabales passed away. In the 70's when his father would do some demonstrations and have his son Vincent with him in the demonstration.

Ever since Grandmaster was 8 years old in 1962, he was training in Escrima it was part of life. It was an honor being Grandmaster Angel Cabales son and learning from him. When Grandmaster Vincent Cabales was young he really didn't realize anything about a legend and really didn't think about it. Grandmaster Angel Cabales was just his dad.

Grandmaster Vincent Cables is planning in the future to go to the Philippines to his fathers barrio to take some pictures for a documentary on Serrada Escrima, once he completes the project he is currently working on.

Trying to get a little better infra structure, open a few more schools and actually run things like a business. Grandmaster Vincent Cabales has already started to produce a training film series but it needs to be polished it up a little more before it can be released. Grandmaster Cabales teaches on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7 to 9:30 pm. The school is located at 136 E Harding Way, Stockton, CA. 95204.

### Learn More about Grandmaster Cabales and Cabales Serrada:



[Click Here](#)



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

**Grandmaster Vincent Angel Cabales.**

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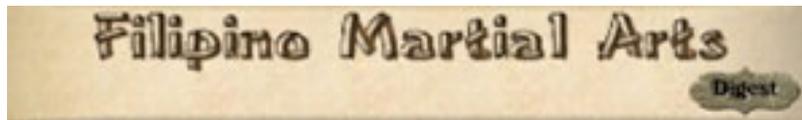


L-R: Master Patrick Armijo, Dr. Remy Presas Jr., Grandmaster Alfredo Bandalan, Grandmaster Max Pallen, Grandmaster Vincent Cabales, and Guro Hansel Chin





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